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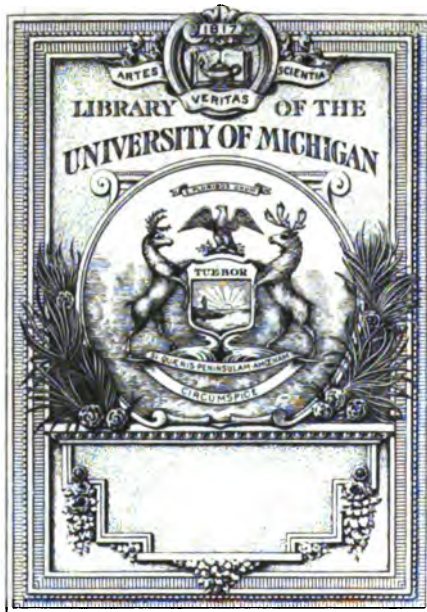
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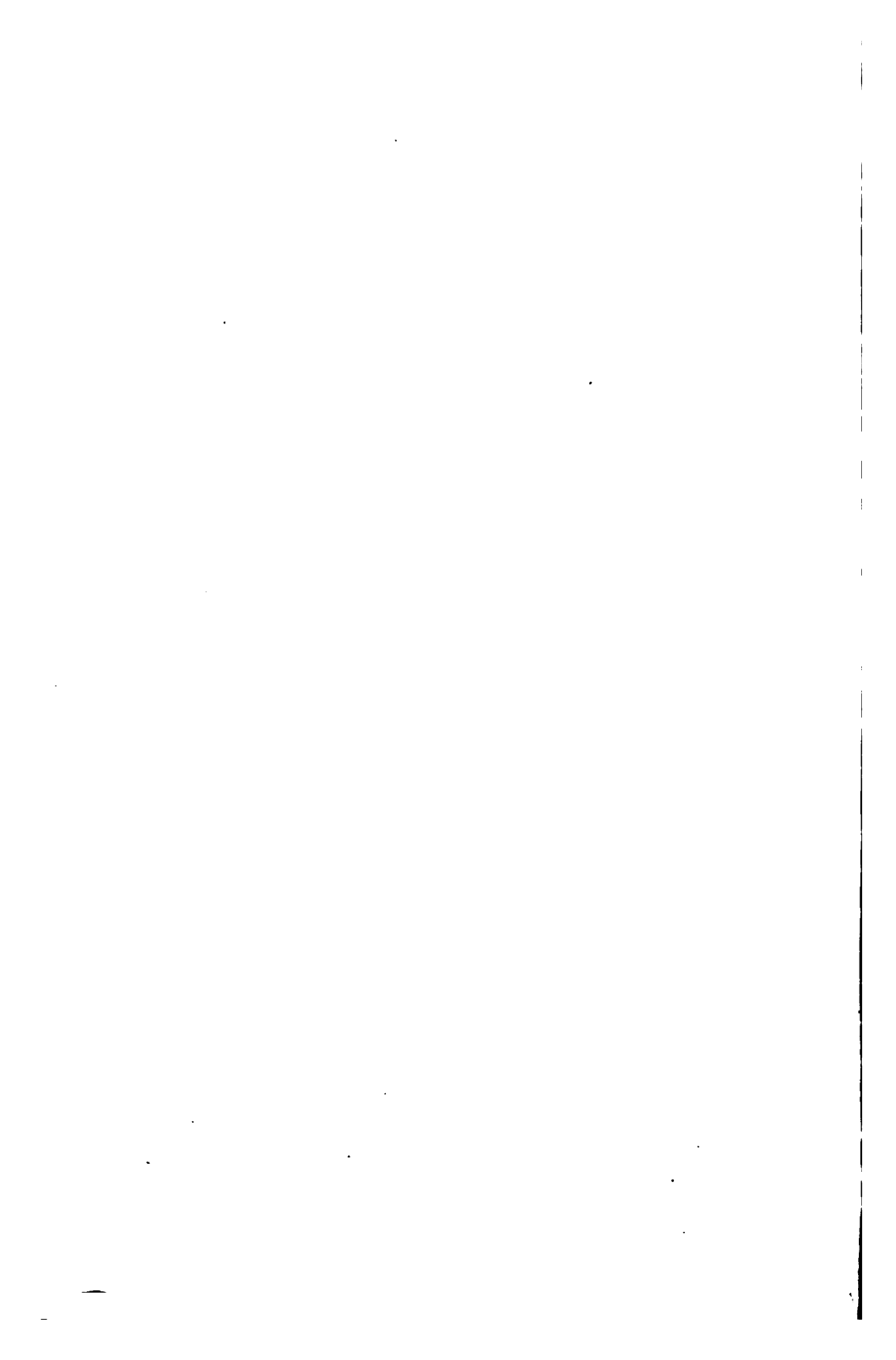


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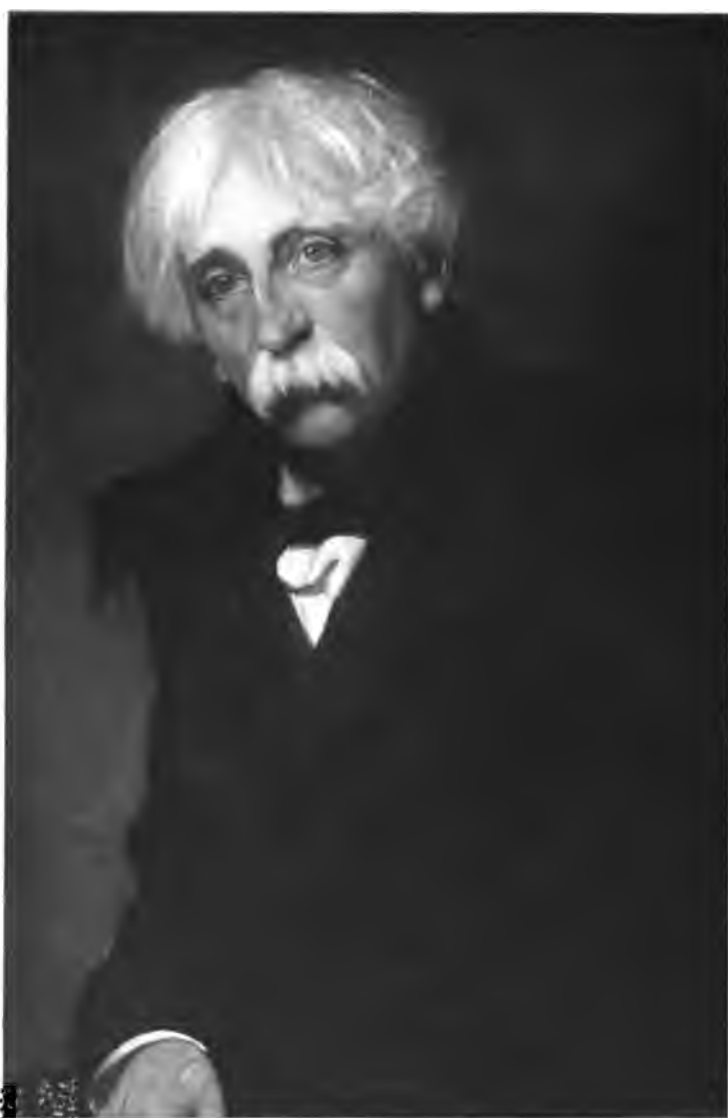
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OTHER DAYS



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Uo

William Winton
From a painting by Frank D. Millet



U.

OTHER DAYS
BEING CHRONICLES AND MEMORIES
OF THE STAGE

BY

WILLIAM WINTER

Of in the stilly night
Ere slumber's chain has bound me
Fond memory brings the light
Of other days around me

MOORE

NEW YORK
MOFFAT, YARD AND COMPANY
1908

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Published, September, 1908

TO MY SON

WILLIAM JEFFERSON WINTER

But for Whose Earnest Encouragement

It Would Not Have Been Written

I Dedicate This Book

With Grateful Appreciation of

Inspiring Impulse and Affectionate Fidelity.

Age doubts, but Youth believes, and Faith undaunted,
Fears not with any test of Time to cope,
But still, with dreams of splendid fortune haunted,
Fans evermore the glorious flame of Hope.



*Gift
Hins of
W. H. West
3.21.41*

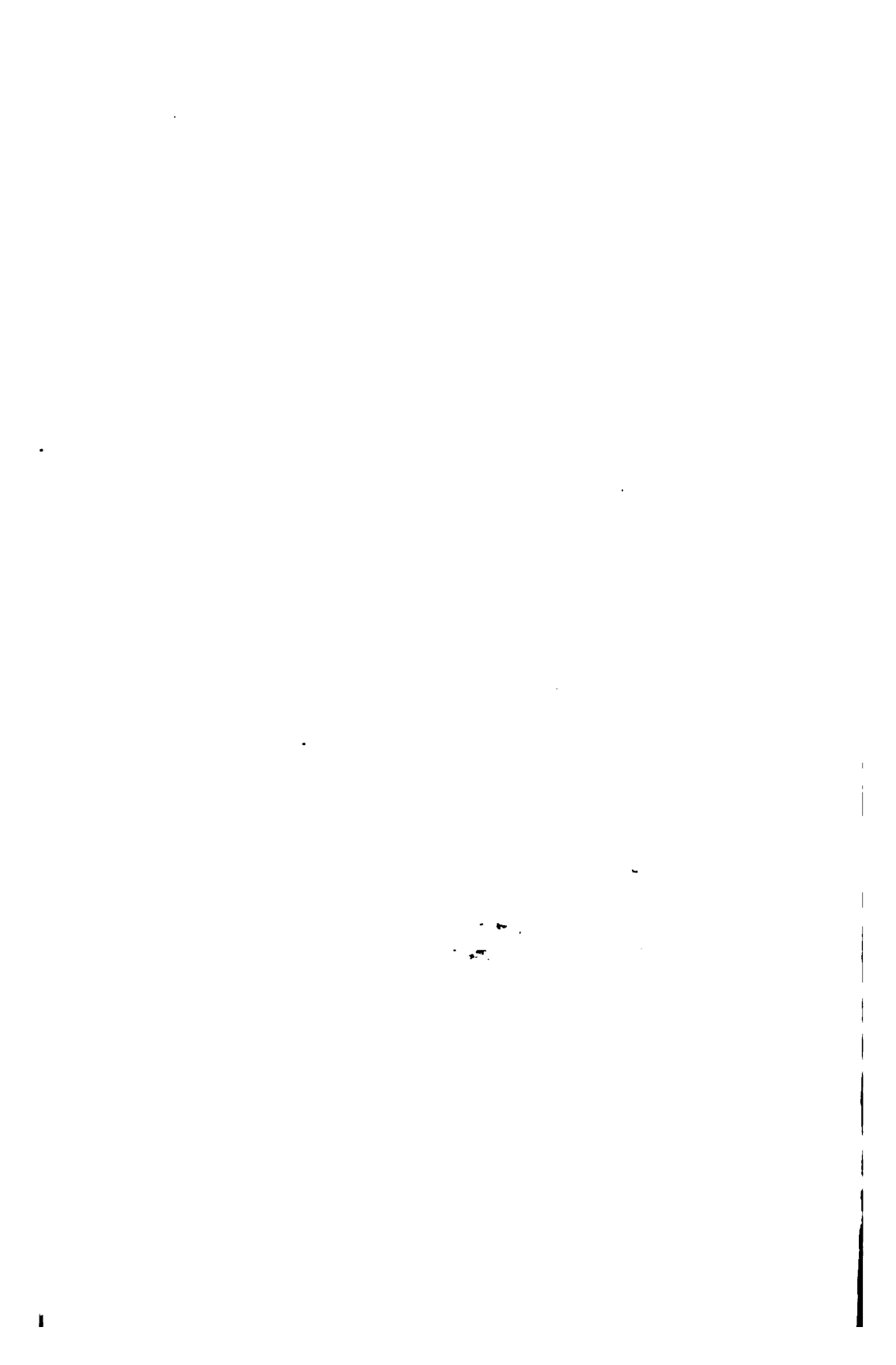
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PREFACE

*It has been my fortune and privilege, during a period of more than fifty years, to be closely associated with the men and women of the Theatre. Some of them have been comrades of mine; intimate friends; daily associates; accustomed to tell me of their joys and sorrows, and to ask and to follow my counsel in the conduct of their professional lives. Their rivalries and the contests of their coteries have surged around me; their triumphs have engaged my pen; their defeats have elicited my sympathy; and,—as it is a happiness to remember,—their finer achievements have, in many instances, been recorded and celebrated, in such a way as to gratify, cheer, and help them, by my literary zeal and industry. I have observed them closely and I have found them exceedingly interesting: sometimes humorous; sometimes pathetic; always sensitive; often sweet and gentle; still more frequently unconventional, hopeful, and gay, and therefore charming companions. My memories of them are numerous and pleasant; and, in view of many requests that have reached me for my *Recollections of the Theatre*, I have concluded that a veteran scribe of the stage may, without offence to good taste, indulge in personal talk about the players whom he*

has known, endeavoring to make true pictures of them "in their guise of every day," and thus to aid in vitalizing and brightening the grave historic page. With that feeling and that purpose I have written the sketches that are comprised in this volume, all of which, except the first one, were originally published in the Philadelphia "Saturday Evening Post," under the title of "Players—Past and Present." The introductory chapter, called A Royal Line, designating past chieftains of the stage, is designed as an historical background to the personal pictures that follow it. One of the ten sketches given in the Post,—a paper relative to that rare genius Richard Mansfield,—I have reserved for incorporation in my Life of that honored and lamented actor, a work upon which, with his sanction, I have for several years been engaged, and which, under the title of LIFE AND ART OF RICHARD MANSFIELD, will presently be published, as a companion to my biographies of Edwin Booth and Joseph Jefferson, in a style uniform with that of the present volume. The closing chapter of this book relates to the condition of the Contemporary Theatre and contains remarks,—pertinent to the Present, informed and justified by experience of the Past,—which are offered, in the sacred name of Art, as what the wise old statesman Rufus Choate once designated "testamentary opinions on the times."

W. W.

New York, April 5, 1908.

*"I have considered the days of old, the years
of ancient times."*

PSALM lxxii, v. 5.

*"The deeds of other times are in my soul. My
memory beams on the days that are past."*

OSSIAN'S BERRATHON.



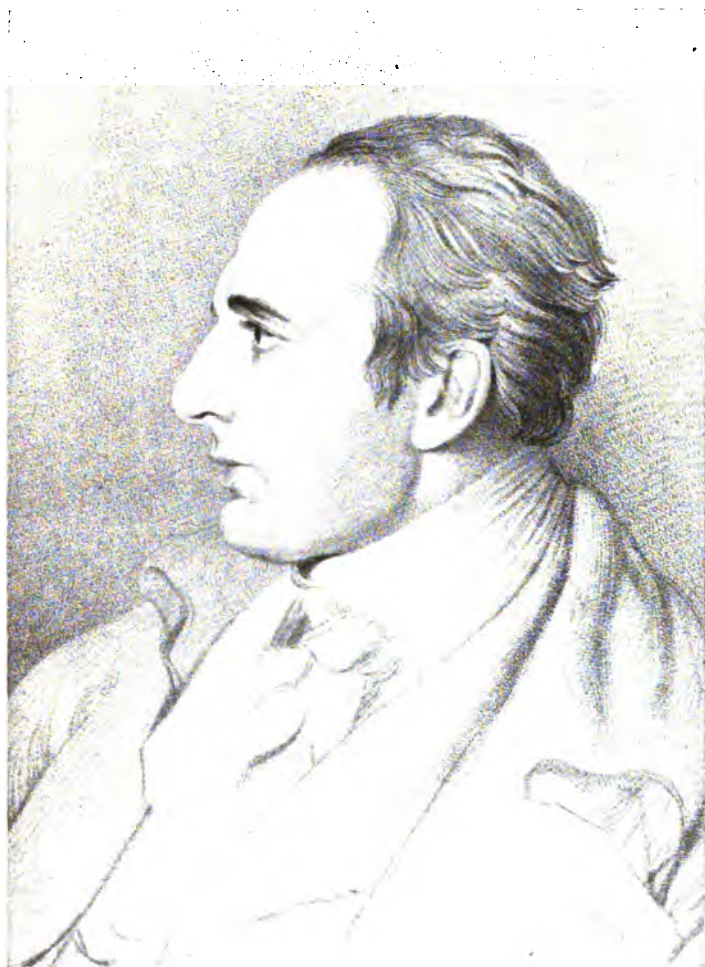
I.

A ROYAL LINE.

AT THE beginning of the nineteenth century the stage in America, after an experience of vicissitude extending over a period of about seventy years, had become an established institution, and by a considerable and influential class of the population it was esteemed and supported. No such attention, indeed, was bestowed upon it as a later time has accorded to it; but, relatively, its rank was respectable, its condition was moderately prosperous, and its prospect was good. Washington had sometimes attended the theatre,—allured thither by “The School for Scandal” and “The Poor Soldier,” which seem to have been his favorite plays, and by little Mrs. Marshall’s piquant acting, with which he was especially charmed,—and his example had been followed by persons of social distinction, though he had passed away. Theatres, most of them shabby in aspect

and poor in equipment, existed in several towns of the young republic, among those places being Williamsburg, Va.; Annapolis, Baltimore, Richmond, Charleston, Albany, Hartford and Providence, but the foremost theatres of the time were the Federal, in Boston, opened February 3, 1794; the Chestnut, in Philadelphia, opened February 17, 1794, and the Park, in New York, opened January 29, 1798,—the Park succeeding the John Street Theatre, which had lasted from December 7, 1767, to January 18, 1798, and had been the field of notable achievement. Those houses were, comparatively, sumptuous, and of those the Chestnut was the most magnificent, and it long continued to be the most important. Such, in America, was the scene on which the procession of actors of the nineteenth century began to move. The population of the then existent twenty-one States was less than six millions. The population of New York,—then, as now, the leading city of the nation,—did not much exceed eighty thousand. The population of Boston was only thirty-six thousand in 1805.

Students of stage history are aware that suc-



JOHN PHILIP KEMBLE

From a Painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence

cessive periods in the development of the English theatre and in the arrangement of its relations with society have, each in its order, been dominated by some one chieftain. In the period of Shakespeare the regnant actor was Burbage. In the age of Queen Anne the sceptre was swayed by Betterton. In the summer of the Georgian era the monarch was Garrick. In the opening years of the nineteenth century the sovereignty was vested in John Philip Kemble. No one of those rulers, indeed, had reigned with absolute, undisputed authority. The crown is a dazzling temptation, and many hands are ever reached to grasp it; but each of those rulers impressed his style upon his time; each dominated by a strong individuality; each had followers; each established a tradition. The impress of Kemble on his period was potent and deep; and of the leading actors, those who ruled the American stage, between 1800 and 1825,—all of whom came from England,—no one had escaped the influence of the royal personality of Kemble and of his sister, the incomparable Mrs. Siddons. That is the first impression derived from the study

of that epoch: and of the Kemble tradition,—meaning, not individual style, but thoroughness of training and universality of accomplishment,—the chief example, at that time, in America, was John Hodgkinson, 1765-1805, who came to this country in 1792, and whose career on our stage was exceptionally brilliant.

The family name of that remarkable man was Meadowcroft. His parents kept an ale-house in Manchester, England, where he was born, and where he passed his boyhood, early displaying auspicious talents, especially in music. When about fifteen years of age, having been bound as an apprentice to a silk-manufacturer and not liking that situation, he privily left home, made his way to Bristol, and, adopting the name of Hodgkinson,—the maiden name of his mother,—presently obtained employment in a theatre, and so began his professional life. He had, in Manchester, been a singer in a church choir, and, with a few young companions, had formed a theatrical club, and had participated in performances, musical and dramatic, surreptitiously given, in a cellar. That scanty preparation, com-



MRS. SIDDONS

bined with his pleasing appearance and ingenuous demeanor, favored his efforts and soon procured him advancement. From Bristol he passed to the midland circuit of theatres, managed by the eccentric James Whiteley,—of whom there is an amusing account in John Bernard's "Retrospections,"—and later, to the northern circuit, managed by Whitlock and the popular comedian Munden; and thus, as a stock-actor, visiting many places, playing many parts, and often acting in association with the most accomplished performers of his time, among whom were Mrs. Siddons and George Frederick Cooke, he developed and matured his powers, not the least of which were intuitive perception of character and prodigious faculty of memory. The historian Dunlap, who did not like him, and who has recorded some disparagement of him, nevertheless testifies to his rare ability. The conservative old critic Stephen Cullen Carpenter, who knew him well, and who has commemorated him with fond admiration, depicts him in lines of illuminative sympathy, impressively instinct with truth:

"Hodgkinson, always correct, always perfect in his part

and master of himself and his character, accomplished his aim by one continuous, unabating, steady, equal, but mild light."

That testimony points to a sustained impersonation, achieved without apparent effort, and therefore with the grace of consummate art. Hodgkinson must have been a great actor. He has been dead for more than a hundred years, but on the historic page his figure still stands forth in living light. According to authentic descriptions of him, he was of a fair complexion, very pale, his eyebrows and eyelashes,—so important to an actor,—being of exceptional beauty. His features were sufficiently regular; his hair was dark brown, but he often wore powder in it. In height he was five feet ten. His figure was fine, except for lack of symmetry in the legs. His eyes could express, with equal felicity, both tenderness and mirth. He had a voice of wide compass, uncommon power, and enchanting melody, and he was a superb singer. In accordance with the usage of his day he played all sorts of parts, his range including such various and contrasted persons as *Hamlet* and *Benedick*,

Macbeth and *Falconbridge*, *Jaffier* and *Lingo*, *Charles de Moor* and *Don Felix*, *Sir Robert Bramble* and *Rover*, *Penruddock* and *Mr. Puff*.

It had been his good fortune to attract the friendly notice of Mrs. Siddons, who perceived his genius and gave him the benefit of her practical advice. In his private life he made some errors, of which the righteous Dunlap, whose vigilant virtue seems to have been uncommonly oppressive to himself, has taken diligent care to provide a record; and those errors were attended with painful consequences. He died suddenly, of yellow fever, at a tavern near Washington, September 12, 1805, and was buried, in an obscure ground, somewhere on the road to Baltimore. In the memory of theatrical scholars, if not in the temple of fame, his figure fills a conspicuous niche, and his name is honored.

The rivals of Hodgkinson were James Fennell and Thomas Cooper,—actors who not only exemplified the Kemble tradition of thoroughness, but also illustrated the Kemble style. Cooper, in particular, seems to have modelled himself on Kemble. That is, almost invariably, the custom

of a young actor, his instinct being to begin by imitating some one whom he passionately admires; but presently he modifies his imitation by surcharging it with his own spirit.

Fennell, born in London, in 1776, went on the stage in 1787, came to America in 1792, and was prominent in the American theatre, sometimes in sunshine and sometimes in cloud, for nearly twenty years. His crowning success was gained in the character of *Zanga*, in Dr. Young's tragedy of "The Revenge"; but he acted other parts, and he was accounted pre-eminent in both *Othello* and *Iago*, and as *Glenalvon*, in Home's long famous, now forgotten, tragedy of "Douglas." He appeared in New York in 1800, at the Park Theatre, acting *Zanga*. He had previously acted in Philadelphia. Fennell was six feet two in height, and he possessed an uncommon mind as well as a commanding person. His eyes were light gray, with yellow eyebrows and lashes. His hair was light brown. His complexion was fair, and he readily blushed. His demeanor was noble. He had been well educated, at Eton and at Cambridge University, in Eng-

land. When at Eton his most intimate schoolboy friend was George Canning, then a lad, four years younger than himself; in after years the great statesman and classic orator. Fennell had read much and he wrote in a respectable style. One comedy by him survives, called "Lindor and Clara." His autobiography, 1814, which, imitating Colley Cibber, he styled "An Apology for the Life of James Fennell," contains sprightly anecdotes and shrewd observations, and it reveals pleasing traits of character. In adopting the stage he took the name of Cambray, but later he discarded it and resumed his own. He seems to have been a flamboyant personage and to have had a grand manner. He could inspire affection, and he gained warm friends. His observation of human nature appears to have been singularly acute. He had studied mankind and had seen the world. In Paris he was acquainted with Marat. In New York he knew Aaron Burr. He was accused of irregularity in his dealings, but it would appear that he deceived himself as much as he deceived others. He showed no wisdom in the conduct of life, but he was brave, alert, ex-

peditious, and incessantly active. His temperament was one of acute sensibility. His heart was kind and his mind generous,—as conspicuously shown in his defence of George Frederick Cooke, a great actor, whose intemperance has been made to occupy an absurdly disproportionate part in theatrical biography.

Fennell's life was one of vicissitude and misfortune. His capricious ingenuity perversely exercised itself in schemes of speculation, which always failed; and, after a melancholy experience of loss, debt, prison, and disgrace, he sank into a state of imbecility, and so passed away, dying, miserably poor, at Philadelphia, in 1816. He had been a leader of the American stage, in tragedy, and it was he who introduced, in America, the star system, a troublesome but practically unavoidable arrangement that began in England in the time of Anne Oldfield, 1683-1730. William B. Wood, the manager of the Chestnut Street Theatre, records that Fennell, as a star, received thirty dollars a night, for two weeks, at Baltimore, in 1795,—not a startling recompense, in contrast with the payments that star actors have

since obtained; but thirty dollars was a considerable sum in those days. The elder Booth, in his best time, stipulated for only fifty dollars a night,—though when the house proved to be uncommonly good he was known to exhibit some rueful discontentment. Cooper, also, only asked for fifty dollars a night.

As to Fennell's style as an actor there is neither much nor instructive testimony. Wood says that "his declamation was of a very high class," and, in recording the last performance that he ever gave, 1815, when he lost his memory and broke down, in "King Lear," mentions that "it is doubtful whether the retirement of any other actor occasioned a more general regret." The man who could give a great performance of *Zanga* must have been a great actor.

One of Fennell's anecdotes relates to an actor named Bland, an uncle of Mrs. Jordan, whom he met at the Edinburgh theatre. That performer was zealous and industrious in his vocation, but infirm of memory; and on one occasion, having entered as the *Earl of Richmond*, in the last act of "Richard III," he began the exhorta-

tory speech of that politic yet adventurous warrior with a new reading. "Thus far we've march'd into the bowels of the land," he observed; then, perceiving his mistake, becoming still more confused, and advancing toward the audience, he exclaimed. "And I vow to my God I can go no further!"

Cooper, whose father was an Irishman and a doctor, was born in 1776; went on the stage in 1792; came to America in 1796, making his first appearance at Philadelphia, as *Penruddock*, in "The Wheel of Fortune"; and remained on our stage, of which he was a shining ornament, for more than forty years. He died at Bristol, Pennsylvania, April 21, 1849, in his seventy-third year, and was there buried. Cooper's career began early and was exceedingly brilliant, nor can there be a doubt that he should be ranked among the great actors of the nineteenth century. The death of his father, in poverty, left him penniless in boyhood, and his mother's cousin, William Godwin, author of "Caleb Williams," then assumed the care of him, and superintended his education for about four years. At sixteen

the lad determined to attempt the stage. Thomas Holcroft, the dramatist, author of "The Road to Ruin," Godwin's intimate friend, and, like him, an enthusiast of the French Revolution, was summoned as an adviser, and soon the influence of those philosophers, while making the youth a Jacobin in political bias (somewhat to his disadvantage at a later day), obtained an opening for him on the stage, with Stephen Kemble, who was in management at Edinburgh.

Several seasons of itinerant acting ensued, till at length, in the autumn of 1795, Cooper was brought forward in London, at Covent Garden, as *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *Lothario*—parts that no youth of twenty ever did, or ever could, adequately impersonate. He did not dazzle anybody, but his acting appears to have manifested auspicious talent and exceptional natural qualifications. He had seen John Philip Kemble and George Frederick Cooke. He had figured in the stage train of Mrs. Siddons. He had studied and striven in a good school. His latent powers were great; and he had boundless enthusiasm. On the American stage the fire of his genius

blazed forth in copious splendor. After coming to America he adopted an A. into his name, in order to distinguish himself from another Thomas Cooper, and, later, a friend of his expanded that A. into Abthorp. When at his meridian, about 1820-1825, Cooper's chief performances were those of *Mark Antony*, *Virginius*, *Damon*, and *Macbeth*. He acted, first and last, one hundred and sixty-four parts. The judgment of his time denominated *Macbeth* his masterpiece. His countenance was remarkable for its mobility of expression; his dark eyes were beautiful; his voice was of uncommon volume and it possessed tones of peculiar, silvery sweetness; his demeanor was marked by a lofty splendor of innate majesty that filled the most exacting ideal of aristocratic magnificence, always commanding respect and often inspiring awe; and, as he was a man of proud spirit and acute sensibility and had deep tenderness of feeling, his acting, in such parts as *Virginius*, *Damon*, and Payne's *Brutus*, must have been perfect. In the expression of wrath he seemed to be transformed into a demon; in the expression of pa-



THOMAS COOPER

From an Old Print

ternal love he looked like an angel. Carpenter wrote of him:

“Cooper, unequal, often incorrect, but at times transcendently great and striking, accomplishes his aim by occasional flashes of fire which electrify and dazzle, then vanish, and, like the transient flash of lightning in the night storm, leave the mind in astonishment and darkness.”

Residents of New York who recall the appearance of the city as it was about 1850-1860 will remember the Carlton House, which stood at the northeast corner of Broadway and Leonard Street, and which was a favorite resort of convivial spirits. That house had been made by the union of two opulent dwellings, one of which, about 1812, was the residence of Cooper, while the other was the home of Stephen Price,—for thirty years, from 1808 till 1840, when he died, the manager of the Park Theatre. Cooper was of a volatile temperament, gay, luxurious, extravagant, and, like a favorite comedian of a later time, John T. Raymond, he had a wildly inveterate propensity for betting. It is recorded that once, seeing, in Broadway, a cart loaded with hay, he made a bet with Price, staking the possible proceeds of his benefit perform-

ance, presently to occur, that he would draw a longer wisp from the load of hay than his companion would. Price won the bet. "I have lost two hours' acting," said Cooper. The receipts of his benefit were twelve hundred dollars. Cooper was also a practical believer in the duel. The reader is not surprised to learn that *Mercutio* and *Charles Surface* were among his admirable impersonations. A stately, courtly, buoyant, graceful, brilliant figure, that great actor, surviving many wrecks of the past, comes upon us with the force of a living personality, and fills imagination's eye as not only the superb dramatic artist, but, of that old school which is now only a memory, the finished gentleman.

No one who thoughtfully ponders over the early period of the American theatre can fail to be impressed with a sense of the intellectual character of the groups of actors assembled and operative along the Atlantic seaboard in the days of the Federal, the Chestnut, and the Park. Those groups included not only such comet-like visitants as George Frederick Cooke, Edmund Kean, and Junius Brutus Booth, but such serene luminaries

as Bernard, Blissett, Darley, Francis, Hallam, Harper, Harwood, Jefferson, Twaits, Warren, Wignell, Wood, Mrs. Duff, Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Marshall, Mrs. Melmoth, Mrs. Merry, Mrs. Oldmixon, Mrs. Pownall, Mrs. Wheatley, and Mrs. Whitlock (sister of Mrs. Siddons). The list of shining names might be considerably extended, but those suffice to indicate the powers and graces that, in the earlier years of the nineteenth century, were coincidentally influential in the advancement of our stage and in the investiture of it with dignity, allurements, and charm.

One of the earliest and most important dramatic aspirants to be impressed and enthralled by the forces then fluent from the theatre was Edwin Forrest, who, born at Philadelphia, in 1806, adopted the stage in 1820, and remained in almost continuous practice of his profession till nearly the time of his death, in 1872. His first regular appearance was made in 1820, at the Walnut, Philadelphia, as *Norval*, in Home's tragedy of "Douglas." Two years later he was acting in Cincinnati, where he attracted the approving attention of kindly old Sol Smith, actor,

manager, and theatrical recorder, who thought that the lad would "achieve greatness," and was not afraid to say so. Later he was at Albany, acting, for seven dollars and a half a week, under Charles Gilfert's management. Then it was that he performed with Edmund Kean, "the comet of a season," and then it was that the great genius, one of the most interesting actors in the annals of the British stage, sang for him (with, as he afterward and often declared and as can well be believed, an expression of infinite pathos), Tom Moore's "Farewell! But Whenever You Welcome the Hour," a song that any poet might be proud to have written, and that any soul capable of feeling might be grateful to hear.

In 1826 Forrest made his first popular hit in New York, acting *Othello*, for a friend's benefit; and by his auspicious success on that occasion he obtained an engagement at the Bowery, then an important theatre, where, presently, he acted *Damon*, *Jaffier*, *William Tell*, and *Mark Antony*. He was successful, and when a man is successful the world accepts him, whether he has

merit or not. Then he went to the sacred temple itself, the old Park, and there he captured the multitude by performances of *Spartacus* and *Metamora*. In 1836 he went to Europe, made a tour of several countries, acted in London, and gained a bride. On his return to America he had a triumphal entrance, and he continued to act, with abundant appreciation, as the popular favorite. The greatest of his contemporaries, meanwhile, was Junius Brutus Booth; but he, unwisely, consumed spirituous liquor somewhat freely from time to time, and was erratic,—which Forrest never was,—and, moreover, had the temperament that shuns the world; so that the popular favorite had the field almost exclusively to himself.

In 1845 Forrest was again in London, where his performance of *Macbeth*, always inadequate and unimpressive, was hissed. That discourtesy of an audience he chose to attribute to the hostile influence of the then imperial English actor, William Charles Macready, who, as he excelled Forrest in several ways, including local popularity, had no reason to oppose the American celebrity,

even had he been inclined to do so. A little later Forrest attended a theatre in Edinburgh, to see Macready as *Hamlet*, and, in the course of that performance,—at “I must be idle,”—rose in his box and loudly hissed his rival. That incident caused a lively newspaper wrangle, in which Forrest participated. In 1848-1849, when Macready made his third and last visit to America and was acting in New York at the Astor Place Opera House,—a theatre situated at the junction of Broadway with Eighth Street, where the Mercantile Library building once stood, and where there is now a shop,—Forrest was acting at the old Broadway Theatre, a fine house at that time, situated on the east side of Broadway, near Worth Street. There was a riot at the Astor Place Opera House, May 10, 1849; the aid of the militia was invoked to quell it; the soldiers had to fire on the mob that was endeavoring to seize and slay Macready; and twenty-two persons were killed and thirty-six wounded. It was believed then, and it is not disbelieved now, that Forrest indirectly fomented that riot and was, to some extent, responsible for it.

No actor of the nineteenth century has been the theme of such acrimonious controversy as Edwin Forrest occasioned; the reason being that harmony can never exist between the antagonistic systems of muscle and mind. Forrest was an uncommonly massive and puissant animal, and all of his impersonations were more physical than intellectual, while no one of them possessed any spiritual element whatever. In the latter part of his life, when he had passed through fiery trials of affliction and been ravaged with grief, he gave a profoundly affecting performance of *King Lear*; but in his prime of achievement his acting was mainly characterized by excessive muscular vigor. He had a magnificent voice, powerful, rich, copious, various, resonant; a face of leonine strength and lowering menace; dark, piercing eyes, and a person of rugged build; and in theatrical situations of peril, suspense, or conflict, requiring the opposition of granite solidity, physical power, and vehement, tumultuous, overwhelming vociferation, he was tremendously effective. In his boyhood he saw Cooper, Edmund Kean, and Conway, and upon those actors he

had modelled his style; but he never manifested the majesty, refinement, delicacy, and grace attributed to Cooper, nor did he ever display any of the characteristic recorded traits of the genius of Edmund Kean. From the first, and until the last, his acting was saturated with "realism," and that was one reason of his extensive popularity. He could at all times be seen, heard, and understood. He struck with a sledge-hammer. Not even nerves of gutta-percha could remain unshaken by his blow. In the manifestation of terror he lolled out his tongue, contorted his visage, made his frame quiver, and used the trick-sword with the rattling hilt. In scenes of fury he panted, snorted, and snarled, like a wild beast. In death scenes his gasps and gurgles were protracted and painfully literal. The bellow that he emitted, when, as *Richelieu*, he threatened to launch the ecclesiastical curse, almost made the theatre walls tremble. The snarling yell of ferocity that burst from him when, as *Jack Cade*, he recognized and sprang upon *Lord Say*, in the forest, fairly frightened his hearers. His utterance of *Lear's* delirious prayer to Nature was

like a thunderstorm. Often he produced amazingly consolatory effects, affording ample gratification to the overstrained feelings of his audience, desirous,—as in stormy passages of “King Lear” and “Othello,” the forum scene of “*Virginius*,” the statue scene of “*Brutus*,” and the scaffold scene of “*Damon and Pythias*,”—that something tempestuous and terrific should be said and done. There are times when it is a comfort to see somebody who can let himself go. Forrest could. His style, accordingly, had its positive, ample, undeniable merits; but neither he nor his apostles were ever satisfied with acknowledgment of those merits at their actual worth.

Forrest’s best performances,—best because true in ideal and decisive in expression, consistent, harmonious, sustained, and complete,—were *Spartacus*, *Jack Cade*, and *Metamora*. It was with the Indian chieftain *Metamora*, a part he despised, that he gained the bulk of his large fortune. His acting was exceedingly fine in portions of *Othello*, *Virginius*, *Damon*, and Payne’s *Brutus*. Amply qualified to excel in the vigorous expression of elemental emotions and the display

of robust physical types of human nature, he insisted on performing *Macbeth*, a part which requires a quality and breadth of imagination that he did not possess, and *Hamlet*,—the intellectual, spiritual, tender, delicate, heart-broken, haunted, vacillating, half-crazed prince,—in which part he looked like the Farnese Hercules and acted like a suppressed tornado.

One of Forrest's admirers, that once galliard actor James E. Murdoch, extolling his "massive and powerful acting," in "chosen characters of Shakespeare," likened him to "the gigantic Moses" of Michael Angelo. Much stilted encomium of that sort was provided for the public edification, in the meridian of Forrest's fame; and, after his death, much of it was crystallized by the Rev. William Rounseville Alger into a huge, ponderous, almost unreadable biography of him, in which there is profuse record of "the dynamic charge in his nervous centres" and of an influence that "undulates away out to the periphery." He was the chieftain of the robust school of acting. As such he had his day, and an opulent day it was; but when he found that the

educated, cultivated world would not accept the robustious school as identical with the intellectual school, but insisted on distinguishing between the body and the spirit, he seems to have felt warranted in becoming, as he did become, a sort of latter-day *Timon*.

In Forrest's domestic life there came a time when he was deplorably unfortunate and unhappy. He had married, in London, in 1837, Miss Catharine Sinclair, daughter of John Sinclair, a celebrated Scottish vocalist, and for ten or twelve years had lived happily with her; but, impelled by jealousy, he repudiated his wife and sought a divorce. A counter suit was brought, a public scandal ensued, and the wife was vindicated. That accomplished gentlewoman, known to me for many years, told me that Forrest's jealous disposition showed itself almost from the first of their married life, on one occasion taking the ridiculous form of resentment against the venerable Lord Jeffrey, the Edinburgh reviewer, one of her father's friends, and one of the most punctiliously honorable and circumspect old gentlemen in the British kingdom. *Iago*, an acute

observer, notices the compulsory power, upon some people, of "trifles light as air." It was a silly love-letter, written by George W. Jamieson, in imitation of the manner of "Consuelo," and found by Forrest among his wife's papers, that wrought the mischief. Jamieson, in after years well known to me, said that he wrote the letter in order to sustain his idle boast that he could write exactly in the manner of "Consuelo,"—a feat which Mrs. Forrest declared it was impossible he, or anybody else, could accomplish. He was the leading man in Forrest's company at the time, and many persons were then reading George Sand's famous novel. Jamieson solemnly declared himself innocent in that affair. He was run over and killed by an express train, on the Hudson River Railroad, near Glenwood, N. Y., October 3, 1868, and he was buried near Yonkers. As an actor Jamieson excelled as *Iago*; *Pete*, in "The Octoroon"; and *Steve Hargrave*, in "Aurora Floyd." He wrote several plays. On hearing of the catastrophe of his death, Forrest wrote:

"I see by the telegraphic news in the paper this morn-

ing that George W. Jamieson was killed last night by a railroad train, at Yonkers. God is great; and justice, though slow, is sure. Another scoundrel has gone to hell—I trust forever.”

Forrest was “a good hater.” He publicly whipped the poet N. P. Willis; he would not allow John Gilbert, that noble actor and excellent man, to appear in any company with which he was acting; he disliked Edwin Booth; he detested Charlotte Cushman; and so deep and bitter was the animosity he cherished against the wife who had divorced him that, within a few weeks before his death, he spoke of her in language of profane and vulgar vituperation. Mrs. Forrest survived till 1891,—becoming blind and helpless toward the end of her life, and passing away in misery. Her grave is in the Silver Mount Cemetery, in Staten Island; Forrest was buried in the churchyard of St. Paul’s, in South Third Street, Philadelphia. It was long ago proposed and has often been urged that the remains should be removed and buried within the precincts of the Edwin Forrest Home, at Springbrook, near Philadelphia,—an institution that was founded, under his will, as a refuge for “actors and

actresses decayed by age or disabled by infirmity."

The Forrest story is tragic and mournful. Forrest's character had elements of greatness, and, but for his colossal egotism, he might have had a happy life and left a lovable memory. Devoted friendship he did obtain,—in his early days that of William Leggett, one of the bright spirits of that time in the journalism of New York; in later years that of James Oakes, of Boston, a man of singularly gentle nature, still affectionately remembered by silver-haired veterans of that old city, who once, when Plancus was consul, lit their cigars at Mrs. Dunlap's shop in Theatre Alley; took their social glass in the cozy bar of the ancient Stackpole; and heard the bell sound midnight from the tower of the old South Church. John McCullough, who knew Forrest well, said that the stern actor's affection for Oakes was so deep that whenever they were to meet, after a period of absence, he insisted that their meeting should be private, as he could not bear that his emotions should be seen by stranger eyes. The rugged old chieftain was capable of

deep feeling. Nobody ever doubted that. It should be remembered also that in his professional life, when he had obtained authority, Forrest was a patron of dramatic composition, and that he never produced a tainted or hurtful play. The edifying discovery, indeed, had not, in his time, been made, that the province of the theatre is to analyze physical disease, to reveal the skeleton in the closet, to supervise domestic morals, and to wash dirty linen in public.

The career of Forrest spanned the middle of the nineteenth century. At its zenith his retrospection necessarily covered many momentous changes and the bright names of many imperial players. George Frederick Cooke he never saw; for that great actor, famous alike in *Richard III*, *Sir Giles Overreach*, *Sir Pertinax*, *Macsycophant*, and *Falstaff*, died in 1812,—the remains of him, lacking the skull and the forefinger bone of the right hand, which were taken, as relics, by Dr. Francis and Edmund Kean, in 1824, resting now beneath a monument in St. Paul's churchyard in New York; but he had seen the illustrious Jefferson, whom everybody loved and honored;

he had acted with Conway, the idol of old Mrs. Piozzi, and with Cooper, Edmund Kean, Junius Brutus Booth, and G. V. Brooke. He had lived through the better days of the old Chestnut and the old Park, and known all the lights of genius and beauty by whom they were graced. He had viewed the eminence and the decline of John Howard Payne, who wrote "Sweet Home," and of Henry J. Finn, the most versatile comic genius of his day. He had seen John Barnes and his beautiful wife; he had watched the rise of Tyrone Power, E. S. Conner, Tom Hamblin, E. L. Davenport, George Vandenhoff, the matchless Burton, all the Placides, all the Jeffersons, all the Wheatleys, and all the younger scions of the great house of Wallack; and he had so impressed himself upon the theatre of his time that imitators of him abounded, all over the land.

Among notable members of the Forrestian school it would, probably, be correct to name David Ingersoll, who was deemed a prodigy, and who died, prematurely, in 1837, and Charles Eaton, who was only thirty when he passed away, in 1843. It would, certainly, be correct to



*Yours Sincerely,
Edwin Forrest*

EDWIN FORREST

—

name Hudson Kirby, 1819-1848, who excelled in "Ercles' vein"; Augustus A. Addams, said to have possessed wonderful genius, who perished young, in 1851; John R. Scott, 1808-1856; Wyzeman Marshall, Joseph Proctor, J. B. Studley, and Daniel Harkins,—all of whom are gone. Among the younger actors whom Forrest deeply impressed, and, to a considerable extent, moulded,—although each of them, in time, departed from his standard and struck out an individual path,—were Edwin Adams, John McCullough, Charles Barron, and Lawrence Barrett. Traces of his style were obvious in the acting of Edward L. Davenport, who much admired him; but Davenport was, distinctively, a more intellectual actor, and early in life had fallen under the spell of a still more potent spirit,—the amazing, the fascinating, the irresistible genius of Junius Brutus Booth.

The career of the elder Booth has been commemorated by many pens; among others, by those of his daughter Asia,—Mrs. John S. Clarke,—and his son Edwin. Some of the records are stern with censure while others are sad

with regret; but almost all of them glow with wonder and admiration. Booth was born in London, in 1796; went on the stage, obscurely, in 1818; appeared in the capital in 1817, as a rival to Edmund Kean, who defeated him; came to America in 1821; acted, intermittently, in many of our cities, for the rest of his life; and died in 1852,—worn out with insane episodes of inebriety and with the ravages of tremendous emotion. It was my privilege to see him, in 1851, as *Pescara*, in "The Apostate." He was then in his decadence; but even then his terrific aspect, his thrilling voice, and his magnificent action imparted a sense of overwhelming power and splendor. In his prime, as a representative of the darker passions and fiercer moods of human nature, he must have been superlative and incomparable. Old records allege a close resemblance between Booth and Kean. It probably was temperamental. They were little men, and slight, and thus far they were alike; but Kean was dark, while Booth was fair; Kean's eyes were very dark brown, such eyes as are commonly called black; Booth's eyes were blue; Kean's voice, though it had a mourn-

ful cadence, was, according to Hazlitt, that of the raven; Booth's voice, before the tipsy fray with his comrade Tom Flynn, in which his nose was broken, was massive, resonant, flexible, and melodious, though incapable of expressing mirth, —nor did it ever lose its magic. In movement both men were electrical; in elocution both were superb. Both men acted, substantially, the same round of parts, neither of them having a large repertory. Kean seems to have excelled in arousing pity; Booth certainly excelled in creating terror. Kean was the more pathetic, Booth the more sinister; and yet the surviving testimony of the past declares that Kean was great in Booth's great parts, *Richard* and *Sir Giles*, and that Booth, in one of Kean's greatest parts, *Othello*, expressed not only the magnanimity of the Moor, but his tenderness, his desolate misery, and his despair, in a way to break the listener's heart. Thurlow Weed, the old statesman, talking with me, in 1875, declared that of all the actors of the previous sixty years Edmund Kean was, to him, the greatest. Rufus Choate, the wonderful orator, when he heard of the death of Junius

Brutus Booth, exclaimed, in passionate sorrow: "Then there are no more actors!" Sir Walter Scott, a devotee of Kemble, once described Kean as "a copper-laced two-penny tear-mouth, rendered mad by conceit and success." "As an actor," said Oxberry, in 1825, "Booth is only second rate." "To see Kean at his best," said Hazlitt, "is one of the consolations of the human mind." "We must regard Booth," said Thomas R. Gould,—who, as a competent critic, had every right to speak on the subject,—“as the greatest of all actors.” Thus, in all periods, is judgment swayed by feeling and directed by individual taste.

Aside from the question of Booth's exact quality and rank there can be no doubt that he was a man of extraordinary genius and that he exerted a potent influence on the stage. In one way his influence, like that of Cooke and Kean, was harmful; because the people, looking on him and on them, and associating their vagaries of inebriety with their marvellous faculty of achievement in dramatic art, were more or less persuaded to believe that genius and delirium are interchangeable terms. At one time the fallacious

notion was widely prevalent, nor has it become entirely extinct, that imagination, the highest and rarest faculty of the human mind, is synonymous with madness, and that moral frailty is a necessary and inevitable attribute to the genial, poetic, temperament. The poet Burns long ago provided the mellifluous but beguiling formula that "the light that led astray was light from heaven." The truth is that "order is heaven's first law," and that even madness operates in accordance with it. Cooke, Kean, and Booth were wildly erratic, but there is abundant reason to believe that, notwithstanding their apparent recklessness, they were attentive students of their art and had learned to know precisely what they wished to do and precisely how to do it. A great actor, now and then, may have sudden and illuminative inspirations while acting, but, as a rule, he leaves nothing to chance. Those giants of the stage, although in one respect their example was pernicious, were, in other respects, the beacon lights of artistic beauty. The principle that they observed, the imperial principle, is stated by *Hamlet*:

"In the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness."

Rant was sometimes used by some of the old actors, yielding to the temptation "to split the ears of the groundlings"; and divers bellowing "barnstormers," imitating the faults of those whom they could not comprehend, were the woful product of that bad usage; but the trend of acting has been steadily away from tumult and extravagance, and steadily toward the royal standard of intellectual control. In every age the acting that has captured the world and prevailed over it has been the acting inspired by genius and governed and guided by intellectual purpose reinforced by personal charm.

The teeming chronicle of the American stage, in the last half of the nineteenth century, is brightly spangled with shining names; among them, to mention only a few, being those of William Rufus Blake; John Brougham; Dion Boucicault; Lawrence Barrett; Charles W. Couldock; William Davidge; Charles Fisher; William J. Florence; John Gilbert; George Holland; James H. Hackett; James Lewis; Charles Leclercq;

Richard Mansfield; John McCullough; John E. Owens; Henry Placide; John Sefton; Mark Smith; James H. Stoddart; William Warren; James W. Wallack; Henry Wallack; James W. Wallack, jr.; Lester Wallack; Barney Williams; Mary Anderson; Mrs. Barrow; Mrs. Bowers; Charlotte Cushman; Mrs. Drew; Mrs. Gilbert; Mrs. Gladstane; Fanny Janauschek; Mrs. Lander; Mrs. Maeder; Helena Modjeska; Julia Marlowe; Adelaide Neilson; Mrs. Ponisi; Ada Rehan; Mrs. Vernon; and Mrs. Wallack. The stage in America, however, was largely dominated, during that period, by two actors respectively representative of comedy and tragedy and likewise of the intellectual principle in dramatic art,—Joseph Jefferson and Edwin Booth. Each of those actors had a great career, and each career would require,—and, from the pen now writing, each has had,—a volume, for its sufficient exposition.

Joseph Jefferson, born in Philadelphia in 1829, gave his first performance at the age of four and his last at the age of seventy-five. He was on the stage for seventy-one years, dying on April

23, 1905, Easter and the Shakespeare birthday anniversary. In his time he acted more than a hundred parts, but ultimately he restricted his repertory to *Rip Van Winkle*, *Acres*, *Caleb Plummer*, and a couple of farces. His supreme achievement was *Rip Van Winkle*,—at first an imitation of the performance of that part by his half-brother, Charles Burke, upon whom his style was modelled, but later a creation of his own genius, in which humor, pathos, poetry, and the spiritual element were conspicuously and harmoniously commingled. Jefferson came of a stage lineage, was born to be an actor, and possessed extraordinary natural advantages. His figure was slender; his features were regular; he had dark hair, gray-blue eyes, and magnificent eyebrows. His voice was clear and sympathetic, and its winning tones were equally expressive of tenderness and genial mirth. His acting was marked by the delightful quality of repose, and its art was so absolutely veiled that it seemed not acting but living, and so created a perfect illusion. Therein consisted his supremacy. He was not a declaimer; he was an impersonator. His per-

formance of *Rip Van Winkle* appeared to be completely spontaneous; it was universally recognized and designated as "natural"; yet, in fact, it was,—and rightly so,—the product of scrupulous art; the result of an intellectual, premeditated, steadily supervised design, formed with laborious thought, and executed, as to even the most minute detail, in accordance with a definite artistic purpose. It seemed as carelessly fluent as the loveliest poetic cadence of Herrick or Darley; as lawless as a drifting cloud; as free and fleeting as the idle, wayward wind that whispers in the fragrant pine or sports with the whitecaps of the sea; it was, in reality, an elaborately constructed mosaic of beauties, born of imagination, made with consummate ingenuity, but illumined with such a glow of genius as fused all its fibres of mechanism into one golden stream of light, and turned all its art to nature. Jefferson had at least eight predecessors in the part of *Rip Van Winkle*,—Thomas Flynn, Charles B. Parsons, William Chapman, James H. Hackett, Frederick Henry Yates, William Isherwood, his father, Joseph Jefferson, and Charles Burke,—and he

has had several imitators; but the image that finally he created, the beautiful ideal which he formed and to which he gave an equally beautiful embodiment, was, as the great Irish orator Charles Phillips said of Napoleon, "without a model and without a shadow." He it was who planned the play that Dion Boucicault made for him, in 1865, out of the Burke version. He it was who prescribed that, in the lonely midnight mountain scene, the spectres should remain silent and the man only should speak; and that single fact gives decisive proof of the poetic insight which was the secret of his sovereign spell.

The dissent of a judicious public taste from the excessive muscularity and animal realism of the Forrestian style of acting found emphatic expression in the bounteous acceptance that was accorded to Edwin Booth. That wonderful actor, one of the greatest that ever lived, and, as a man, exceptionally noble, gentle, affectionate, and good, was born in 1838, near Baltimore, where he passed his boyhood and learned the rudiments of his profession. At first he travelled with his father, the erratic Junius, as a companion and an

assistant, but in 1849 he regularly adopted the calling of the stage, and that calling he pursued for forty-two years. In the summer of 1852 he accompanied his father to California, where he remained for four years, incidentally making a trip to the Samoan and Sandwich Islands and Australia. His most valuable early experience was obtained in theatres of the Pacific coast. In 1856 he returned to the East, and almost immediately his splendid acting, dominated by intellectual purpose and yet luminous with passion, made him famous. His rise was rapid. In 1861 he acted in London and in other cities of England. From 1863 to 1867, but for one brief intermission, he managed the Winter Garden Theatre, in New York, making magnificent productions of "Hamlet," "Richelieu," and "The Merchant of Venice." In 1869 he opened Booth's Theatre, which he directed for about four years. He afterward filled many brilliant engagements in the capital, and made many prosperous tours of the country. In 1880, 1881, and 1882, he again acted in England,—at one time, May, 1882, in conjunction with Henry Irving,

at the London Lyceum Theatre, when those chieftains alternated the parts of *Othello* and *Iago*. In 1883 he made a professional tour of Germany, which was attended with abundant triumph. In 1888 he founded the club called The Players, 16 Gramercy Park, New York, presenting to it land, building, library, pictures, and all needful outfit, and thus he rounded an illustrious career with a munificent and lasting benefaction. His first performance, that of *Tressil*, in Cibber's version of Shakespeare's "Richard III," was given on September 10, 1849, at the Boston Museum; his last, that of *Hamlet*, was given on April 4, 1891, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. He died, at the Players, June 7, 1893, deeply lamented, and was buried at Mount Auburn, near Boston.

In point of physical advantages for the stage Edwin Booth excelled most, if not all, his contemporaries. His head was noble; his person was symmetrical; his presence was distinguished. In repose he was incarnate dignity. In action he had the velocity of light. His voice was ample, sonorous, thrilling, sympathetic, and at times in-

expressibly sweet. His eyes were large, dark, lustrous, magnificent, the lashes and brows being thick and greatly contributive to expression. His style had been modelled on that of his father, but, as he matured, it underwent a radical change, repressing the elements of tumult and frenzy and exalting those of intellect, poetry, spirituality, solemn beauty, and tender grace. His elocution was, at all times, delicious,—a luxury to hear. He had a regular repertory of sixteen parts; eleven chosen from Shakespeare, five from other poets. His greatest impersonations were *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Lear*, *Iago*, *Richelieu*, *Bertuccio*, and *Brutus*. Like his father, he was essentially a tragedian; he did not appear to the best advantage in light or low comedy. One comedy performance that he gave, however, that of *Cardinal Richelieu*, was a work of consummate art and it was comprehensively representative of his nature and his style. The play, though artificial, is faultless for the purpose of the stage; because it creates a lovely illusion. The performance was marvellous for its investiture of artistic glamour and for its effect of nature. It seemed absolutely

spontaneous,—the natural image of sweet, gentle, reverend age. It was pathetic with the melancholy composure of a great mind, calm and patient after dangers braved, difficulties conquered, and bitter griefs endured. It was stately with an ecclesiastical authority that appeared innate and not assumed; and at the climax, it was magnificent with the grandeur of virtuous power illumined with righteous passion. No impersonation has been seen, with more in it of heart, and exquisite finish. The art of it was like an embroidered cloth of gold. Every detail of that memorable embodiment, nevertheless, had been planned with scrupulous care and executed with formal fidelity to a settled design. "I am conscious," Booth once said to me, "of an interior personality standing back of my own, watching and guiding me." It was his clear intellect. In every important part that he played he revealed a great nature; and the memory of his genius, his beautiful character, and his beneficent life can never pass away.

At the end of the nineteenth century the sovereign of the stage was Henry Irving, a great



To
William Wister
with kind regards
of his friend
Frederic Bond



actor, a great man, and one of the noblest, gentlest, and most lovable spirits that ever wore human form. Henry Irving was born at Keinton, a village near Glastonbury, Somersetshire, England, on February 6, 1838. His family name was Brodribb, and in christening he received the names of John and Henry. The name of Irving was not assumed by him until he went upon the stage, and it was not until after he had used it for several years and made it eminent that he obtained from Parliament the legal sanction to bear it. His mother's family name was Behenna. His childhood was passed partly in the neighborhood of Glastonbury, partly in Bristol, and partly in Halsetown, Cornwall,—the latter town being the home of his maternal uncle, Captain Isaac Penberthy. In that home, amid the romantic Cornish scenery near St. Ives, he was reared under the care of his aunt, Mrs. Sarah Penberthy, a woman of strong character, noble mind, stately presence, and simple manners, from whom he received the blessings of wisdom and love. His reading, in childhood, was limited to the Bible, "Don Quixote," and a collection of old

English ballads. In his eleventh year he was sent to London and placed at a school kept by Dr. Pinches in George Yard, Lombard Street, where he remained for about two years; and there he obtained all the regular educational training that he ever received. On leaving school he found employment in the counting-house of an East India merchant in Newgate Street, where he spent four years,—not neglecting his clerical duties, but incidentally giving much attention to the study of the drama, for which, even in childhood, he had manifested propensity and aptitude. In 1853 he joined a society called the City Elocution Class, and at the meetings of that club he distinguished himself by the fire and skill of his recitations, the accuracy and scope of his memory, and the felicitous promise of his acting. Samuel Phelps, 1804-1877, was at that time conspicuous as an actor and a manager, at Sadler's Wells Theatre, Islington, and Irving was sometimes a delighted spectator of his performances, then valued among the most scholarlike and adequate works of dramatic art that could be seen on the English stage. In 1854 he took lessons

from William Hoskins, an actor at Sadler's Wells, and he also received tuition in fencing from a clever swordsman named Shury, in Chancery Lane. In 1856 he relinquished his clerkship and formally began his career as an actor, his first engagement having been obtained at a new theatre, called the Lyceum, in Sunderland. His first appearance there, September 29, 1856, was made as *Gaston, Duke of Orleans*, in Bulwer's "Richelieu," and on the same night he played a cook, in the extravaganza of "The Enchanted Lake." From that time his life was continuously devoted to the stage. His professional career was divided between England and America. His renown belongs to both countries, and in both it will long be cherished. He made eight professional tours of America—in 1883, 1884, 1887, 1893, 1895, 1899, 1901, and 1903; at first accompanied by Ellen Terry; at last alone; and his success in our country was very brilliant. Irving raised the stage to such eminence as it never before had known. His public life was illustrious with splendid achievement and his private life was lovely with every virtue. On July

19, 1895, he received the honor of knighthood from Queen Victoria. In the extent and variety of his repertory,—which comprised nearly seven hundred parts,—and likewise as an *impersonator*, an executant who should be distinguished from the elocutionist, he excelled all other actors. His greater performances were those that move in the diverse realms of imagination, pathos, and sardonic humor: *Hamlet*; *Macbeth*; *Mathias*; *Dr. Primrose*; *Charles I*; *Don Quixote*; *King Lear*; *Corporal Brewster*; *Becket*; *Mephistopheles*; *Louis XI*; *Shylock*; *Iago*; *Lesurques*; and *Dubosc*. His brilliant, indomitable intellect and his tremendous energy inspired intellectual society wherever he appeared, and he left upon the stage an impress of power and beauty that can never be effaced. In person, he was tall, thin, and of a remarkably aristocratic, ascetic aspect. His eyes were dark and beautiful, the brows being singularly expressive. His hair, in middle age, was iron-gray. His features were finely moulded, his movements graceful, his gestures broad and grand in style. His use of his hands, when acting, was wonderful. His voice

was strong and clear, but under great excitement his tones became somewhat nasal and his utterance indistinct. Record of the fine moments of his acting would fill a volume. He continued to act till nearly the moment of his death, which befell at Bradford, England, on the night of October 13, 1905, almost immediately after the last curtain had fallen on his impersonation of *Becket*. His ashes rest near those of Garrick, in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey; nor is there, in all its long annals, a nobler name than that of Henry Irving.

II.

JOSEPH JEFFERSON.

Joseph Jefferson was an intimate friend of mine during the last forty-five years of his life. It was my privilege to know him well,—and to know him was to love him. He was not only a great actor, he was a man of noble mind, original character, sympathetic temperament, and lovely spirit; he not only exercised a potential influence upon the dramatic profession, to which his life was devoted, but by virtue of the sweetness and kindness that his genial nature diffused, through the medium of his acting, he deeply affected the lives of thousands who were personally strangers. He was of a theatrical race, beginning in the time of Garrick; he began acting when he was a child; and, as he continued to act until within less than a year of his death, in his seventy-seventh year, he, practically, passed all his days on the stage. Like many dramatic infants that

have arrived since the advent of the play of "Pizarro,"—May 24, 1799,—he was "carried on" as "Cora's child"; but his first professional appearance was made in 1833, at a theatre in Washington, as a literal juvenile miniature copy of Thomas D. Rice, in the negro character of *Jim Crow*. His last appearance was made on May 7, 1904, at Paterson, New Jersey, as *Caleb Plummer*, in "The Cricket on the Hearth," and as *Mr. Golightly*, in "Lend Me Five Shillings." In the course of his career he visited many countries and acted many parts: those of record exceed one hundred: but during his later years he restricted his professional achievement to *Rip Van Winkle*, *Caleb Plummer*, and *Acres*, with an occasional presentation of *Doctor Pangloss* or *Doctor Ollapod*. The farce parts of *Golightly*; *Hugh de Brass*, in "A Regular Fix"; *Woodcock*, in "Woodcock's Little Game"; and *Tobias Shortcut*, in "The Spitfire," were favorites with him. As *Golightly* he made a signal hit, in London, in 1877, when he participated in performances for the benefit of the respected veteran, Henry Compton (Mackenzie), and that part retained

his favor till the last. With those implements he reared and maintained the fabric of a great reputation; and, now that his once familiar figure is receding into the past, while the dramatic images that he created are gradually growing dim, there is a kind of comfort in musing on the story of his life and on the charm that made him victorious and endeared him to the world.

Jefferson was so entirely an actor that his art had become, in a measure, involuntary; yet not wholly so, because, at all times, even when acting instinctively, his intellect watched over his feelings and guided the expression of them. When he put on the raiment of a part he unconsciously assumed the spirit and aspect of the part,—his countenance and demeanor becoming expressive of the character then in contemplation. Once, in his cottage at Hohokus, New Jersey, I was with him in the garret of that dwelling, and we were inspecting costumes for the comedy of "The Rivals," which he had determined to alter and revive, resuming the part of *Acres*,—one that he had acted years before. His particular quest was for a suitable hat. My attention chanced to be

attracted to some play-books that were at the end of the room, and for a little while I did not observe him; but presently, looking up, I saw him,—completely absorbed in his scrutiny of the dresses,—put on a characteristic hat, and, instantly, as he did so, he assumed the face and manner of *Acres*. He had forgotten that any person was present. His gravity was prodigious. His assumption of *Acres* was complete. He never “looked the part” more effectively in the best public performance that he ever afterward gave of it. The spectacle was irresistibly comic. That was a denotement of the involuntary operation of the actor’s instinct of expression. I asked him whether, if he were suddenly called on to act an old-comedy part, that he had ever previously played, it would be possible for him to act it without reviewal and preparation. “Yes,” he said, “if I were waked from a midnight sleep, and told that I must act *Pangloss*, or *Ollapod*, or any one of those old parts in which I was trained, I could go on and do it at a moment’s notice.”

When, however, the time came for Jefferson to act, his instinct would be reënforced by pur-

pose, and he would have a reason for every movement and a distinct design dominating every deed and word. He once said, to a member of his theatrical company: "*I never did anything on the stage that I did not know I was doing,—never anything without the intention to do it.*" That, in the main, was true. Every essential detail of every performance that Jefferson ever gave had been carefully considered by him, and scrupulously adjusted to the fulfilment of a definite plan. Prescience of intent and executive precision are delightful attributes in a work of art; but their presence did not wholly explain the allurements of Jefferson's acting. The magical charm of his acting was the deep human sympathy and the loveliness of individuality by which it was irradiated,—an exquisite blending of humor, pathos, grace and beauty, that made it an intimate and confidential impartment to each and every mind and heart in all the vast auditory that he addressed. He often made me think of Emerson's expressive line: "Surely he carries a talisman under his tongue."

Among my treasures there is a volume contain-

ing the play of "Rip Van Winkle," enriched with this inscription, by the comedian:

"To my dear Friend, William Winter, who (tho' rating me far too high as an actor)—has, more than any other writer, hit upon the cause of this Drama's endurance. J. Jefferson, April 12th, 1896."

The professional rank that it was my privilege to assert for Jefferson,—long before his name had become famous,—has since been awarded to him by, substantially, universal assent: the rank of a poet among actors. The reason of the "endurance" of "Rip Van Winkle" was that, as interpreted by Jefferson, it had the irresistible charm of poetry.

There is an ancient Greek story of a youth named Epimenides, who went up into a mountain to seek for a strayed sheep, and fell asleep in a cave, where he was mysteriously charmed, so that he slept for more than fifty years; and when he awoke, and returned to the place that had been his home, he found himself among strangers and he was viewed as a stranger, till, presently, he was recognized by his brother, who, meanwhile,

had become an old man. The idea of such a story was early adopted into German literature. The reader of Longfellow's beautiful poem of "The Golden Legend" finds a charming version of it in that poet's mediæval tale, apparently versifying an old German myth, of the enchantment of the monk Felix, who, walking forth from his convent, into the forest, listened to the ravishing song of a snow-white bird that had dropped from heaven, and, on returning to the convent, found all things changed and himself unknown,—till an aged monk recognized him as a brother who had disappeared a hundred years before. Perhaps this fabric of fiction, taking various shapes and appearing in various places, is a survival of the fable of the seven sleepers of Ephesus, which is more than fifteen hundred years old.

It was in an offshoot of German literature that Washington Irving found the material for his ingenious, blithe, fanciful story of "Rip Van Winkle." If the reader cares for a bit of antiquarian information, he can find the original of Irving's sketch in a work called "The Enchant-

To my Dear Friend
William Winter
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too high as an actor) —
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Joseph

April 12th 1896

FACSIMILE LETTER FROM JOSEPH JEFFERSON
TO THE AUTHOR

ing and Marvellous Repository," Vol. III. (Boston, 1842),—that original having been translated from the German of a writer named Otmar, under the title of "Peter Klaus. The Goatherd." Peter enters a cave in the mountains, where twelve old knights are playing at nine-pins; he drinks wine; he becomes insensible; he sleeps for twenty years; he returns to his native village, only to find himself among strangers; he inquires for old friends; and he is recognized by his daughter.

As a play, "Rip Van Winkle" came on the stage May 26, 1828, at Albany, New York. Jefferson, in the character of *Rip*, had at least eight predecessors,—his father being one of them; and, apparently, at least ten theatrical versions of the story were extant, and had been used, before Dion Boucicault crystallized the subject into the drama that Jefferson made generally known. Later versions of the piece have been acted. In one of them *Rip's* dog is introduced, and presently the skeleton of the animal is disclosed, in a tree, which is supposed to have grown during the vagabond's slumber, and to have carried the remains into the air!

When Jefferson began to act *Rip* he imitated the performance of it that had been given by his half-brother, Charles Burke, whom he idolized. Afterward he ceased to imitate and developed a method of his own. He had revamped the play, as derived from Burke, but he knew its defects, and he wanted, and planned, a better drama. It was then that he applied to Dion Boucicault, communicating his plan and asking that veteran dramatist to rearrange and rewrite the play. Boucicault undertook the task, and, within about one week, completed it. Jefferson had originated the device that the spectres, in the mountain scene, should remain speechless, while only the human being should speak; and that was the principal stroke of genius in the drama.

Jefferson has been called a Swedenborgian. He was, in fact,—or he was strongly inclined to be,—a “spiritualist.” It may, or it may not, be a rational faith: it, obviously, is a cheering and comforting one, and therein as satisfactory as any other, concerning a matter about which the human race does not possess, and, apparently, cannot obtain, positive knowledge. To Jefferson

it was satisfactory. He told me that as soon as he heard of "the Fox sisters" and their revelations he was persuaded that those persons were, probably, in communication with the spiritual world. His belief in personal immortality and in the likelihood of intercourse with spiritual beings was absolute, and it never was shaken or disturbed. In every trouble and sorrow that came into his life that belief sustained him. Possessing, as he did, a nervous system of exquisite sensibility and a profoundly sympathetic temperament, that faith took possession of his feelings, and, in his acting, it was of signal advantage to him. In the mountain scene in "Rip Van Winkle," when the man is encircled with the phantoms, he seemed to become transfigured; he lifted *Rip* into the realm of imagination; he diffused the atmosphere of poetry; and he made that episode as weird, mysterious, pathetic and awful as the scene of *Hamlet's* meeting with the *Ghost*. No observer, who ever really saw, can ever forget the wistful, awed, unearthly expression of Jefferson's face as he looked upon those spectres and realized that, as a mortal, he was *alone*.

Boucicault, in rewriting the play, followed Jefferson's scheme,—incorporating into it a recognition scene between *Rip* and his daughter, *Meenie*, which, substantially, is a variant of the recognition scene, in "King Lear," between the venerable monarch and his daughter, *Cordelia*. Boucicault, as a custom, took material for his plays wherever he chanced to find it: he was seldom wholly original; but, as Jefferson once said to me, "If he steals satin, he embroiders it with silk." But Boucicault had no confidence in the drama of "Rip Van Winkle." Jefferson,—who left New York in the summer of 1861, and, in the course of four years, visited many countries,—had arrived in London in June, 1865, and, then and there, had obtained Boucicault's aid in preparing the piece. It was produced, September 4, 1865, at the Adelphi Theatre, under the management of Benjamin Webster. Boucicault was acting at another theatre, and therefore could not attend the first performance. He called at the Adelphi, however, to see Jefferson, early on that memorable evening, and found him in his dressing-room, making up for *Rip*. "I'm sorry

for you, Joe," he said; "the piece won't go here; but I hope you'll get through;" and with that cheering remark he departed. The impersonation made a decisive hit. Even the stern Saturday Review commended "an art that thoroughly conceals art" and is "aided by a happy union of natural qualities." Webster, who was accustomed to visit Paris whenever there was a success at his theatre, announced, next morning, his immediate departure for that joyful metropolis. After a while Boucicault was free and could attend Jefferson's performance. "I looked down," said Jefferson, in stating these facts to me, "and I saw his old, shiny, bald head, and I acted *Rip* as well as I could. When it was over he came round to see me, and he said: 'Joe, I think you are making a mistake: you are shooting over their heads.' I replied: 'I am not even shooting *at* their heads—I'm shooting at their *hearts*.'"

Jefferson, in his Autobiography, intimates that he had not thought of acting *Rip* till the summer of 1859, when, in a farmhouse in Paradise Valley, on a rainy day, he chanced to be reading the "Life of Irving," and came on a reference to

himself, and was led to think of "The Sketch-Book" and of *Rip*. He says that he remembered some "bad dramatizations of the story," and that he "repaired to the city, where he ransacked theatrical wardrobe-establishments for old leather and mildewed cloth," and completed a costume for *Rip*, and compiled a play. That account, of course, contains truth; but Jefferson, as I told him, and as he laughingly admitted, was "a heedless historian."

The fact is that he became fond of the part when he was a youth of twenty,—seeing it acted by Burke, and acting with him as *Seth*. He told me, in 1866, that he was early charmed with *Rip* and that he had often made up for it, and acted it, in private, for his own pleasure; this he had done long before 1859, at which time he was thirty years old and had become known in his profession. The sum of the matter is that Burke's example prompted Jefferson to choose *Rip*; that he chose it early in life; that he altered and improved Burke's version; that he departed far from Irving's sketch, presenting a radically different ideal of the character; that he elevated

the subject by his inventive skill and his poetic genius; that he obtained from Boucicault a well-formed play,—paying, in royalties, about \$25,000 for it; that the chief felicities of the drama were devised by himself; and that he added a new and delightful figure to the stage.

Jefferson never wore any article of costume that was not scrupulously clean. Indeed, he made a special point of absolute cleanliness. "The actual farmer," he said, addressing this writer, "wears soiled clothes; but there is a day when he has a bath, and is shaved, has his boots brushed, and wears a clean shirt; and *this is that day*. *Gretchen* was always washing clothes, so *Rip's* clothes couldn't have been always dirty." No actor ever was more scrupulous, punctilious and imperative than Jefferson in his insistence on the ideal as opposed to the actual. That principle was at the basis of his acting. He abhorred realism.

Many years ago Jefferson bought an island, about ten miles from New Iberia, among the bayous of Louisiana. Walking with him, one day, in the woods of that estate, we were con-

versing about the antiquity of trees, when suddenly he paused and fixed his earnest gaze on one stately, splendid old tree, a few yards from our path. Then approaching it, and caressing its trunk, he said, in earnest, affectionate tones, "I never noticed this old chap before." There was, in his face, in his voice, in his gesture, in his spirit, the genuine, deep, unaffected love of Nature—the intuitive sympathy with natural things that we feel in some of the poems of Wordsworth, when that great poet becomes self-forgetful and is inspired. That feeling was in his performance of *Rip*. No other actor has expressed in art, as he did, the spirit of humanity in intimate relation with the spirit of physical Nature.

His ready credulity of anything mysterious or wonderful likewise deeply permeated his acting. He told me that he once entered the presence of his friend Grover Cleveland just as another comrade had related an incredible incident, and that Mr. Cleveland, seeing him coming, mirthfully said: "Tell that to Jefferson. He'll believe anything!" and he added, "My answer was, 'Of course I will! The world is full of wonders,

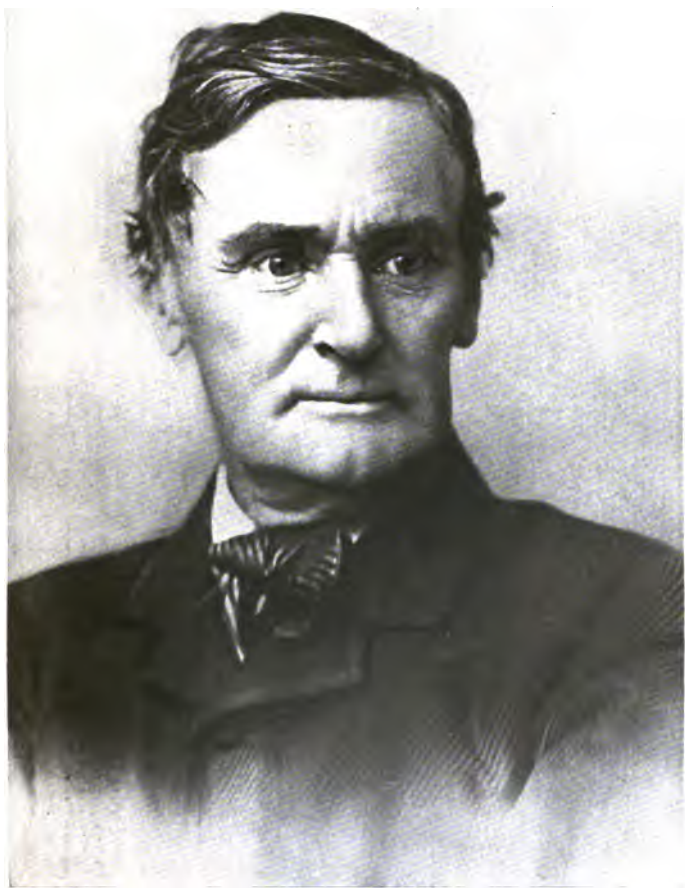
and another, more or less, does not surprise me.' ” From that he proceeded, in a strain of profound earnestness and winning simplicity: “Why shouldn't I believe in possible communication with other planets, or with the spiritual world? A hundred years ago telephone communication between Chicago and New York would have been thought even more improbable.” With regard to Burke,—for whom, as an actor, Jefferson's enthusiasm knew no limit,—he said: “I never loved anybody like my brother Charles, and, when I die, I know perfectly well that he will be beside my bed, waiting for me.”

In the attribute of humor Jefferson was blessed to a degree that it would be difficult to exaggerate. His presence seemed to be a motive for comic occurrences. At the funeral of John McCullough, the tragedian, he and I were pallbearers, together with other persons, mostly actors, and as our melancholy train was halted in a Philadelphia street, he glanced along the line and gravely remarked, “I never knew before that there were so many *walking gentlemen* in my profession.”

One night, when he was making up for *Doctor Pangloss*, he talked to me about education,—a schoolmaster having displeased him in treatment of one of his boys. “I have written to that man,” he said,—beaming upon me with the sapient air, and from beneath the preposterous wig, of *Pangloss*,—“and I have told him that I consider arithmetic to be the *least important* of all earthly studies. Why,—look at me! I’ve managed pretty well,—but *I* couldn’t add up a long column of figures!”

I once went with him, at evening, to see a prominent “spiritual medium,” in New York,—a person said to possess even more than Glendower’s capacity. As, in the dusky light, we slowly approached the abode of this seer, Jefferson became unaffectedly solemn, saying to me, in accents of profound conviction: “This medium is wonderful; but I don’t know whether he can do much to-night. The poor man has just lost his wife:” then, changing in an instant, he added; “But I don’t know why that should put him *out of spirits!*”

Another incident, of which he told me, is espe-



'A D—a disconcerting countenance
J. J. Johnson

cially expressive of the quality of his humor. In the middle of the night, at his Hohokus cottage, a sound was heard as of a person moving in the lower part of the house, and he was requested to go down and investigate. "If there *isn't* anybody there," he said, "there's no use of my going down; and if there *is* anybody there, I'm *damned* if I'm going down."

The foibles of enamoured or fastidious persons afforded him amusement, and his observation of them was exceedingly keen. Many years ago, in Boston, when Lawrence Barrett was wooing the beautiful and excellent lady whom he afterward married, Jefferson suddenly said to him: "Barrett, you're in love." "What makes you think that?" asked Lawrence,—astonished at the discovery of his secret. "You've changed your waistcoat three times to-day," Jefferson said.

Speaking to me of George L. Parkes, an actor, an elderly and vain beau, whose mind was concentrated on his personal appearance, he said: "I got a chance at him once, in a farce, when it happened that I had to embrace him. His hair was beautifully curled and every thread of it in

order. I held him tight and rumbled his curls, and then I heard him murmur, in a tone of positive agony, 'Oh, God' He was not in the least hurt, but he seemed to feel that his last hour had come."

The scrupulous exactitude of the studious antiquary afforded him amusement, for he had no memory of dates and was gayly careless of research. The laborious attention that I gave to details, when writing "The Life and Art of Joseph Jefferson" (1894), while winning his approval, also excited his merriment,—for he knew that, among other things, I had crossed the ocean, and visited Ripon, England, to make inquiries about the career of his great-grandfather, the first of the Jefferson Family of Actors, 1728-1807, who died in that city and was buried within the precincts of Ripon Cathedral. The actress Elsie Leslie, when a member of his dramatic company, observing a slight discrepancy between his Autobiography and my Memoir, asked him which record was correct. "Oh," replied Jefferson, "his is: Willy knows a great deal more about my history than I do!—and he takes a great deal more interest in it!"

Jefferson inherited his father's temperament. "If you are your father's son," said the old family doctor, addressing him, in after years, "you are fond of fishing." He was passionately fond of that sport, and remarkably expert in casting the fly. I went fishing with him once, in Paradise Valley, and had occasion to observe, not only his skill, but his conscientious principle as a sportsman. He struck a trout through the tail and landed it; then, somewhat ruefully, he said: "You know that's not *fair*." And he threw the fish back into the stream. Of a lady, whom he loved and honored, he said: 'She's very nervous when she's fishing. First she's afraid she won't get a bite,—and then she's afraid she *will*!'

Discovery of the charm of Jefferson's acting was not difficult to those who saw him act. Designation of it was never easy. Few of his auditors ever tried to put it into words. It cannot be stated in an epigram. Examination of the characters of *Rip* and *Acres*,—in which two parts he fully revealed himself,—with analysis of his interpretation and expression of them, would arrive at the result, disclosing and defining an ex-

ceptionally rich and various nature, combined with great felicity of dramatic art. Those parts he, literally, created; for *Rip*, as Jefferson displayed him, never existed until he made him manifest; and the *Acres* that he embodied was a higher and finer type of man than the *Acres* drawn by Sheridan, a far more exquisite fabric of whimsical humor; and in remaking that character the comedian refashioned and improved the comedy for practical purposes.

Jefferson was not a man of learning, nor was he, technically, an educated man, nor "a reading man." He studied Darwin. He liked to ponder on the philosophy of Seneca. He was acquainted with Colley Cibber's "Apology" and with kindred books. He revered Shakespeare and he read him rather more than most people do. He declared,—blaming himself and not the bard,—that Milton was beyond his comprehension. He thoroughly knew and dearly loved the works of Dickens. He was not strongly attracted by the greater works of Thackeray. One of his favorites was Byron's "Vision of Judgment." In the latter half of his life he gave some attention to

books, and he collected a small library. But he was not, and did not pretend to be, a scholar, nor was he habitually a student. On the other hand, he was a close observer, and he learned in the school of experience. He was a great actor, a sympathetic painter, a clear, straightforward writer,—showing, in his style, that “unconscious simplicity” which, as acutely noticed by Gibbon, “always constitutes genuine humor.” Universities gave degrees to him as a Master of Arts. He had positive ideas about right and wrong in the conduct of life. As a moralist he was rigid, —not narrow; not uncharitable; but distinctly and sternly precise. He was intrinsically honest, and he expected other persons to be so; and, if they were dishonest, he condemned them without mercy. “The persons that I pity,” he said to me, “are the persons who are *born* bad. Those are the pitiable creatures,—the poor, wretched beings who *cannot help* being wicked.” He was thoroughly acquainted with the art of acting. On that subject he could speak with knowledge and authority. He had learned all that there is to be learned of that art, and nobody could teach him

anything about it. When he was on the stage he *liked* to be the centre of attention; he *liked* to have the whole scene to himself; but he perfectly well knew the importance of auxiliaries and the value of the proportion of component parts to make up a symmetrical whole; he could, and whenever needful he always did, completely subordinate himself to the requirements of the scene. His mind was clear and positive, furthermore, as to religion. He had a definite, absolute belief,—a reverent conception of the Divine Being; but for sectarian creeds he entertained a profound contempt, and upon clergymen, as a class, he looked with distrust and aversion. Aside from practical ethics, dramatic art and religious faith, his views on most subjects were indifferent and transitory. He was more a man of imagination and feeling than of cold intellect and exact thought. He was full of caprices; mercurial and fanciful; a creature of moods; exceedingly, almost morbidly, sensitive; eagerly desirous to please, because he loved to see people happy; willing, if necessary, to displease everybody rather than win favor by unworthy means or by

the violation of a principle of art; quick to fancy that he had been misunderstood; very affectionate; keenly sensible of the misfortunes and sufferings of the lame, the blind, the deaf and the wretched; inordinately fond of approbation, and, at the same time, aware of the shallow mentality and hypocritical insincerity of many of the persons who make up the social world; appreciative of the beauties of physical Nature, passionately fond of them, and skilful in painting them; as much a lover of sports as though he were a boy; worldly-wise, and yet absolutely simple; sagacious in practical affairs, but credulous about everything preternatural or improbable; an instinctively correct and (when left to himself) an unerring judge of character, but apt to be influenced by the nearest person who chanced to have possession of his confidence; innately modest and humble, but aware of the exceptional merit of his artistic faculties and of their value; serious, almost solemn at heart, but, superficially, volatile, mirthful and good-naturedly satirical; tender in feeling, but quick to see the comic side of everything,—even of things the most serious;

devoted to art in its highest form, yet tolerant of the chromo-lithograph, which he considered helpful in the education of ignorant persons; benevolently democratic, but an aristocrat by nature,—often quoting, with ardent approbation, a saying by old John Rice, once Mayor of Chicago, that “we cannot *change* the world, but we *can keep away from it*”; in public matters governed by a scrupulous sense of duty; and in every relation of private life lovable, admirable, conscientious and true. The world has seldom known a creature in whom pathos, humor, wisdom and frolic, were blended as they were in Joseph Jefferson.

NOTE ON RIP VAN WINKLE.

The first play on the subject of Irving’s sketch, of which a record has been found, is one called “Rip Van Winkle; or, The Spirits of the Catskill Mountains,” produced at Albany, N. Y., May 26, 1828, for the benefit of Mrs. Flynn, wife of Thomas Flynn, who was the first performer of *Rip*. The author was designated “a Gentleman of this City.” *Lowena (Gretchen)* was acted by Mrs. Flynn. Announcement of the first per-

formance of that play occurs in the Albany "Argus," May 24, 1828. Flynn acted *Rip*, on June 29, 1833, at the Richmond Hill Theatre, New York.

Flynn, an actor of rare talent and interesting character, fell a victim to the infirmity of intemperance. He was the intimate friend of Junius Brutus Booth, the elder, and it was in one of their carousals that, defending himself from a crazy attack by Booth, he struck the tragedian, with a pewter pot, and broke his nose. Of Flynn's acting, as *Rip*, I have found no record, but he seems to have had the temperament for the part. Ireland, a sagacious and trustworthy recorder, describes him as "a jovial companion, free, easy, and generous, taking no heed for the morrow."

The second representative of *Rip* was Charles B. Parsons, a young man who had been trained for the pulpit, and who, eventually, left the stage and became a clergyman. Parsons had acted with Flynn, at Albany, as *Derrick*. The version used by Parsons was bought, in New York, in the summer of 1828, by N. M. Ludlow, the man-

ager,—author of “Dramatic Life As I Found It,”—and it was produced by him, in the fall of that year, at Cincinnati. “There was no name claiming authorship,” writes Mr. Ludlow, “attached to the copy that I had. . . . It passed off without appearing to create any interest more than a drama on any ordinary subject.” Mr. Ludlow adds that a youth named Barry, who performed as *Nicholas Vedder*, replying to old *Rip*’s question, “Who is George Vashington?” elicited “prolonged and deafening applause,” when he answered “He was first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen.” “Gags,” it is evident, were as effective then as they are now.

The third performer of *Rip* was William B. Chapman, who acted it at the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, October 30, 1829, with three members of the Jefferson family in the cast: Elizabeth Jefferson, then Mrs. Samuel Chapman; Jane Anderson, later Mrs. G. C. Germon, a Jefferson by descent; and “J.” Jefferson, probably John,—Joseph Jefferson’s uncle. Chapman’s version is thought to have

been made in England, by a dramatist named Kerr.

The fourth *Rip* was James Henry Hackett, whose performance it was my good fortune many times to see; and I remember it as, from the domestic point of view, entirely admirable: it had the truth of nature, and it was both humorous and pathetic. Hackett presented his version of the play on April 22, 1829, at the Park Theatre, New York, and he repeated it at the Bowery, on August 10. On April 15, 1831, he again played at the Park, in a version of *Rip* said to be "altered," by himself, "from a piece written and produced in London." When Hackett made his second visit to England, in 1832, his play was remodelled, and improved, by William Bayle Bernard, 1808-1875, author of "The Nervous Man" and editor of "Retrospections of the American Stage," by John Bernard, his father,—a comedian especially distinguished in the early time of our drama. After presenting W. B. Bernard's piece in London, Hackett produced it at the Park, in New York, on September 4, 1833, and in that version he acted till the last. His

performance of *Rip* was, for many years, widely known and greatly admired. Sol Smith wrote of it: "I should despair of finding a man or a woman, in an audience of five hundred, who could hear Hackett's utterance of five words, 'But she vas mine frau,' without experiencing some moisture of the eyes." That encomium is but faintly indicative of the effect of Hackett's acting. He treated the character as domestic and rural: he made no attempt to invest it with poetry or with a spiritual, preternatural quality: he was, specifically, human, and he touched the heart.

The fifth *Rip* was Frederick Henry Yates, for whom W. B. Bernard had made a play on the subject before he remodelled Hackett's version. Yates acted it, at the Adelphi Theatre, London, in the season of 1831-32, with the distinguished comedians J. B. Buckstone and John Reeve in the cast. Yates never came to America.

The sixth performer of *Rip* was William Isherwood, who acted it at the Front Street Theatre, Baltimore, in the season of 1833-34, in a version made by John H. Hewitt.

In his "Autobiography" Jefferson says that *Rip* was acted by his father. I have not found any account of that performance. Jefferson's father seems not to have made a decisive mark as an actor. He should be ranked, on the authority of his son, as the seventh representative.

The eighth *Rip* was Charles St. Thomas Burke, who made a version for himself, which was produced at the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, in the season of 1849-50. Then it was that Joseph Jefferson, our *Rip*, first acted in the piece, playing *Seth*, the inn-keeper; and then it was that he first became acquainted with the subject and was fascinated with the character of *Rip*. Jefferson's first public performance of *Rip*,—so far as I have been able to ascertain,—was given in 1859, at Carusi's Hall, in Washington. His first performance of it in New York occurred in 1860.

Charles Burke's performance of *Rip* has been thus commemorated by that rare comedian, the late John Sleeper Clarke: "The speech containing the notable line 'Are we so soon forgot when we are gone?' is Burke's, not Boucicault's, though

Jefferson has transposed it for the better. . . . No other actor has ever disturbed the impression that the profound pathos of Burke's voice, face, and gesture created. His delivery of the question fell upon the senses like the culmination of all mortal despair, and the actor's figure, as the low, sweet tones died away, symbolized more the ruin of the representative of a race than the suffering of an individual: his awful loss and loneliness seemed to clothe him with a supernal dignity."

Jefferson himself said, "We get as near to Burke as we can, and he who gets the nearest to him succeeds the best." It was the opinion of Jefferson that the style of Burke reappeared, measurably, in that of our old comrade Edwin Adams,—once a favorite in the part of *Enoch Arden*,—a man whose smile was sunshine, from a heart full of kindness; and also that the French comedian Leduc, who came to New York in the train of Mlle. Tostee, in 1867, much resembled Burke. Jefferson and I several times attended the French Theatre, in company, in order to see Leduc; and charming he was,—by rea-

son of remarkable sensibility, spontaneity, and grace.

"Burke was a great actor and a true man" (so wrote to me the comedian Frank Chanfrau, who had often acted with him and who knew him well); "he could do many things in acting, and was wonderful in all he did."

Rip Van Winkle, or anybody else, might well moralize over the celerity with which oblivion overtakes and submerges past achievement. One brisk commentator, Mr. Francis Wilson, airily dismisses the personations of *Rip* by Hackett and by Burke with the blithe remark that "the elder Hackett, Burke, and even Jefferson had failed to make any really great impression in the early versions of "*Rip Van Winkle*." Nothing could be further from the truth. Hackett made a prodigious impression with *Rip*, and so did Burke,—as great an impression as it was possible to make, in the times in which they lived. Mr. Wilson may be expert in gathering "chestnuts," but he reveals complete ignorance of the persons and times of which he has undertaken to treat. A little careful inquiry would have told that hap-

hazard writer that Burke was, to some extent, ostracised in New York, by the powerful adverse influence of William E. Burton, who was jealous of him and dreaded him as a formidable rival,—a fact which accounts for any inadequacy in contemporary records of Burke's professional life. But Burke had a large following in New York, on the East Side, while in some other cities his popularity was extraordinary,—his performance of *Rip* having been, relatively, as much admired, in his day, as that of Jefferson has been, in ours. Hackett was, for a long time, one of the leaders of the stage,—a potent manager in the days of the old Chatham Theatre, the old Bowery, the old National, and the old Astor Place Opera House: the compeer of Jack Barnes as *Dromio*; admittedly phenomenal in his versatility; a consummate exponent of many styles; able to embody, with equal fidelity and effect, the comic Yankee, the pathetic Frenchman, and the dashing woodland hero of the western wilderness. Jefferson, in his book, has spoken somewhat slightly of Hackett; but, all the same, Hackett was an actor of wide range; for he could

play *Sir Pertinax MacSycophant*, in "The Way of the World," and *O'Callaghan*, in "His Last Legs," and he could impersonate *Falstaff*, equally in the History and the Comedy,—and *Falstaff* is one of the greatest characters in fiction. Hackett successfully retained the part of *Rip* in his repertory for thirty-six years, till Jefferson eclipsed him with a new and widely different impersonation. Such an actor is not to be undervalued,—least of all by a person who never saw him, and was not even born when that actor's fame was at its meridian. One of the sorriest plagues of this period is the Scribbling Actor, and still another is the kindred ignoramus who will persist in trying to write stage history without knowing anything about his subject.

III.

JOHN BROUGHAM.

WHEN I first saw John Brougham, more than fifty years ago, he was impersonating *Captain Murphy Maguire*, in the comedy of "The Serious Family," and upon my mind, which then was young, his acting made a deep and permanent impression. It was not only his fervent, sparkling, natural performance that attracted me, it was the personality of the actor,—that subtle quality, potential either to charm or to repel, which, in a long experience of the stage, I have found to be of vital and decisive importance. He had dash, buoyancy, joyous freedom, a combination of graces and allurements making the gallant manliness that always wins the heart of youth. That charm he never lost. Time made him, personally, sedate, but his acting never ceased to be blithe and happy. Mirth was as natural to him as music to the rippling brook or

color to the rose. There are, in the old English comedies,—and those same types occasionally appear in modern romantic drama,—characters of a free-and-easy order; persons to whom fortune, whether it be good or bad, is a matter of indifference; gay, cheery, kindly, drifting, droll creatures, who enjoy the passing moment and accept all vicissitudes of experience with a light heart and a careless smile. In parts of that kind John Brougham was superb. He could and did impersonate many types of eccentric character,—such as *Bunsby*, and *Bagstock*, in “*Dombey and Son*”; *Micawber*, in “*David Copperfield*”; *Mr. Stout*, in “*Money*”; *Of-lan-agan*, in “*The Veteran*”; and *Powhatan*, in “*Pocahontas*”; and in all of them his humour, exuberant and winning, had the artistic excellence of seeming to be completely involuntary; but the parts in which he was preëminent were the dashing cavaliers, especially those of the Irish race,—the ardent, generous, reckless souls that sparkle through life without heed for to-morrow, doing kindness and making laughter all the way; and, during his period, he surpassed rivalry in that particular and

delightful vein and was the unmatched representative of a fine tradition.

The stage of England and America has seldom lacked adornment in the shape of a brilliant Irishman. Irish Dogget, in Cibber's time, must have been a marvel of talent and versatility. Brougham, as an actor, was the lineal descendant of Charles Connor, of Tyrone Power, and especially of John Johnstone,—he whose daughter made a runaway match with the elder Wallack, and became the mother of that graceful, glittering comedian, Lester, who, indeed, was named for him, John Johnstone Wallack. Some of the parts in which Johnstone was famous are *Patrick*, in O'Keefe's "The Poor Soldier"; *Inkle*, in Colman's "Inkle and Yarico" (the precursor of the delightful Gilbert and Sullivan operas); *Looney McTwolter*, in "The Review, or, The Wags of Windsor"; *Dennis Brulgruddery*, in "John Bull"; *Major O'Flaherty*, in "The West Indian"; *Murtoch Delany*, in "The Irishman in London"; *Captain O'Cutter*, in "The Jealous Wife"; and *Sir Lucius O'Trigger*, in "The Rivals." Several of those parts, and many oth-

ers like them, were acted by Brougham, and no performer could ever have embodied them with closer fidelity to the Irish nature, with rosier humor, or with more felicitous art. It is recorded of Johnstone that his vocalism, though unscientific, was delicious: he was a lovely singer: and also it is recorded of him that he enunciated the word "beautiful" with a rich significance of emphasis never equalled by anybody else. Brougham's singing was of the same lawless order, and, as may be surmised, less fascinating; but for investing words with the honeyed cadence of Irish blarney Brougham possessed a capacity quite superlative. His wheedling tones and sparkling mirth, when he acted *Captain Maguire*, were captivating and irresistible. (Julia Bennett Barrow was the *Widow Delmaine*, and a tantalizing and dashing widow she was, when I first saw him play *Maguire*.) His performance of *McShane*, in Bayle Bernard's "Nervous Man," was the perfection of rattling vivacity and audacious, merry impudence; while as *Felix O'Callaghan*, in "His Last Legs," he embodied a broken yet spirited gentleman,—putting a

bright face on misfortune, showing intrinsic kindness and a keen sense of honor,—in such a way as to touch the heart even while evoking peals of laughter. Another of his fortunate performances, of this class, was that of *Fitzmaurice*, in "A Gentleman from Ireland," a play written by Fitz-James O'Brien, to which Brougham made considerable additions. At one point in that piece he introduced what he called "ad libitum language," saying whatever occurred to him at the moment, and depending on his interlocutor to respond and keep up the colloquy. That was a custom of some of the older comedians of the British stage, such as the famous William T. Lewis and the gorgeous Robert Elliston. *Fitzmaurice* is a fine type of the Irish gentleman; full of fire and feeling; tender, gallant, gay, cheerful in adversity and inexhaustible in humour. The part exactly fitted Brougham, and he played it with the ease of a second nature. As the elegant *Sir Lucius O'Trigger* he was perfection. No one in our time has played that part so well. It was the Irish gentleman more than the Irish peasant that elicited Brougham's best

powers,—although he was exceedingly droll in such parts as *Rory O'More*, *Pat Rooney*, *Larry Hoolagan*, and *Teddy O'Rourke*. The Irish singing comedian John Collins, famous as *Paul Clifford*, whom I often saw, and much admired, during his last season in America, was accounted extraordinary as *McShane* and *O'Callaghan*; but, though polished and vivacious, Collins possessed nothing like the elegance and dashing buoyancy of Brougham. The consummate representatives of the Irish peasant, in our time, on the American stage, were John Drew, 1827-1862, Barney Williams, 1824-1876, and William J. Florence, 1881-1891. As the Irish *gentleman* Brougham excelled them all.

Old persons, it is commonly believed, remember the incidents of very early life much more clearly than they remember those of middle age. That may or may not be true; but it certainly is true that old persons who might be supposed to possess interesting and valuable recollections commonly defer the record of them until too late an hour,—till their enthusiasm has lapsed into indifference and their minds have become enfeebled

with sloth. I often urged John Brougham to write his reminiscences and he often promised to do so, but he did not begin the work till within a few months of his death, when his spirit was broken with disappointment and his body was wasted with disease. After his death the few pages of an autobiography he had begun were placed in my hands. Those pages are agreeably written, but their value is inconsiderable. They relate to minor domestic incidents of his boyhood, and they proceed not beyond his entrance at Dublin University, with some account of practical jokes at college and of boisterous manners and frolics in the Dublin Theatre Royal of that time. His life extended over a period of seventy years, and, socially and professionally, he came into contact with many interesting persons and had ample opportunity of observing many interesting events; but he made no chronicle of his memories. His talk, indeed, was picturesque with description and amusing with anecdote; but his talk is lost. I recall many occasions of festive companionship with him, when the conversation was delightful: the smoke, however, goes up the chim-



JOHN BROUGHAM
1810-1880

ney. Faithful record of the talk on even one night, years ago, when John Brougham, John Gilbert, Lester Wallack and I dined together at Brougham's house, in West Twenty-fourth Street, New York (he kept "bachelor's-hall" there, at No. 14), would be a veritable "purple patch" of pleasantry, wit, satire, reminiscence, artistic discussion, kindness and mirth. Those old friends of mine are dead; their labors, ambitions, hopes, joys and sorrows are all at rest; their "flashes of merriment" are silent and dark. No pen but Brougham's own could write the full chronicle of his long and opulent experience.

In variety of illustrative anecdote Brougham's talk was exceptionally rich, but his spontaneous fluency and deliciously vital and droll manner cannot be signified in words, nor would it be possible to record a tithe of his comic stories. He manifested a particular aversion to Charles Kean and to Macready, both of whom, as "stars" of the first magnitude, had acted under his management. Charles Kean, he declared, was the most selfish of actors. "When I had worked hard, and almost exhausted myself, to make everything

pass off smoothly and pleasantly for him," he added, "all he could find to say to me was that somebody in the balcony had slammed a door and caused him great annoyance, and that it must not occur again. Kean," Brougham said, "had a voice like a man with his mouth full of pudding. When he acted *Shylock* he used to exclaim, 'You take my life when you do take the *beans*' (instead of *means*) 'whereby I live.' Everybody employed on the stage had to wear list slippers when Charles Kean was acting."

Brougham's disapprobation of Macready was still more emphatic. It is a matter of record that in the fall of 1848, in association with Burton, he leased the Howard Athenæum, Boston, in order to present Macready and Mrs. Wallack,—an actress of stately presence and remarkable dramatic power, the wife of J. W. Wallack, Jr.,—in plays of Shakespeare. Many years afterward, talking with me about the vicissitudes of his career, he related an anecdote of Macready, which seems particularly to illustrate the petulant severity and the irrational temper, commingled with kindness, so characteristic of that great actor.

The night, he said, was very stormy. Macready was in his dressing-room, attended by a serving-man, whom he had brought from England as a dresser. "Look about you," the stern actor fiercely exclaimed, addressing his attendant. "Where is it? Can I have nothing done as it should be?" The terrified servant looked about, but remained bewildered and helpless. "My book of beards," growled Macready,— "where is it?"

"I must have forgotten it, sir," said the frightened dresser. "I'll run to the hotel and fetch it." The attendant departed.

"I had come to the room," said Brougham, "to make sure that everything had been done for Macready's comfort. When the servant had gone he produced a bottle of sherry, and, without ever offering me a single taste of it, he sat there, sipping the wine, and, with many oaths (for, although pious, and sincerely so, he was, when excited, profusely profane), cursing the negligence of everybody. Soon the servant came back, bringing the book of beards. Macready received him with anger and fearful imprecation, consigning his soul to the nethermost pit. 'When I took

you from London,' he exclaimed, 'I promised your friends that I would look over you, and take care of you, and now, on such a night as this, *you go into the wet streets with nothing on your feet but slippers.*' Then there was another burst of profane indignation. It was a case of filling the air with brimstone."

Brougham's ancestry was, in part, French. He came of a well-reputed and prosperous family; he was born in Dublin, May 9, 1810; received education at private schools and at the Dublin University; "walked the hospital" in his native city with the design of becoming a doctor, but, because of financial adversity, abandoned the study of medicine and went to London to seek his fortune. Destitute in that city, he tried to enlist himself as a soldier, but the recruiting officer, to whom he had applied, perceiving that the handsome youth was fitted for a better station than to become "food for powder," dissuaded him from enlistment, gave a guinea to him, and advised him to seek a different service. That proved to be the crisis of his destiny, for, within a few hours of that incident, he was, by chance, led to

the Tottenham Court Road Theatre,—afterward the Prince of Wales,—where, presently, he obtained employment, thus beginning the dramatic career which ended only with his life. He made his first appearance on the stage in 1830, in six characters, in Pierce Egan's drama of "Tom and Jerry,"—a rough-and-tumble play, that once was exceedingly popular. His professional labors were divided between England and America. He came to this country in 1842, remaining here until 1860, when he returned to England. He came again to America in 1865, and here he resided, in active occupation, till the end of his days. His last appearance on the stage was made at Booth's Theatre, New York, October 25, 1879, as *Felix O'Reilly*, a detective officer, in a play by Dion Boucicault, called "Rescued." Brougham wrote upward of threescore plays, the first of them being a burlesque for William E. Burton, produced at the Pavilion Theatre, London, in 1831, and the last being a romantic drama, having a political bias, entitled "Home Rule": as a patriotic Irishman he felt, and evinced, much interest in that subject. In a memorandum of his career that he

wrote for me in 1868 (the manuscript of which I still possess), he claimed joint authorship with Boucicault of the comedy of "London Assurance,"—his words being as follows: "Wrote 'London Assurance,' in conjunction with Boucicault, who claimed the entire authorship, according to his usual ungenerousness. Had to bring an action against D. B., whose legal adviser suggested payment of half the purchase money, rather than conduct so damaging a case." Boucicault, who then called himself Lee Moreton, had sold the play to either Benjamin Webster or Charles Mathews: the latter actor produced it, May 4, 1841, acting *Dazzle*.

In later years Brougham and Boucicault consorted, professionally, on amicable terms, but their private estimates of each other were not of a flattering character. Speaking to me of Boucicault, and descanting on the singular instability sometimes discernible in the Irish race (a fickleness that Lord Beaconsfield attributed to its "propinquity to the wild and melancholy ocean"), Brougham said: "If Dion had to play a second-old-man, he would scalp his grandfather

for the wig." "Boucicault's voice," he remarked, on another occasion, "sounds like the rattling of broken china at the bottom of a dry well." Recording those observations, I can but think of the humorous remark of Doctor Johnson. "Sir," said that sage, "the Irish are a fair people; they never speak well of one another."

It ever seemed to me that in temperament Brougham was kindred with the poet Oliver Goldsmith. He had the same benevolent simplicity and careless generosity,—and he had the same bad luck. He was delightful in his art, whether as actor or writer, but in practical affairs he was customarily unfortunate, because he was a dreamer. He wrote well and he acted well, but almost every business enterprise in which he embarked came to grief. In the time of the Civil War he sold, for twenty thousand dollars, a large tract of land that he owned, near the lake shore in Chicago, which, if he had kept it a few years, could have been sold for half a million. He sold to the comedian, William E. Burton, for about two hundred and fifty dollars, his play on the subject of "Dombey and Son," which pros-

perously held its place on the stage for two seasons, and upon which Burton reared the structure of his fortune,—giving a wonderful serio-comic personation of *Cap'n Cuttle*. He undertook to establish in New York a comic paper, called the "Lantern," but in the course of its lifetime of eighteen months he only succeeded in losing upward of four thousand dollars. He opened Brougham's Lyceum in 1850, but, when obtaining a necessary loan of money, he signed, without reading it, a paper that forfeited his lease; so that, after about fifteen months, the theatre was taken out of his hands (it became Wallack's in 1852), and he was left burdened with a debt that absorbed most of his earnings during several ensuing years. He managed the old Bowery Theatre for ten months, from June 30, 1856, till April 29, 1857, frequently changing the bill, and once producing, in magnificent style, Shakespeare's "King John," for which he used Charles Kean's scenery, considerably augmented; but the venture failed. He adapted "The Duke's Motto," for Charles Fechter, when employed at the London Lyceum, but, as he told me, his sole rec-

ompense was a box of cigars that Fechter gave to him, after the play had been successfully produced and was filling the treasury. To the last, although his career was not barren of triumphs and blessings, mischance and disappointment attended his steps. "Ah, me," he once said, "if I had quarrelled with misfortune I should have been dead long ago." In a kindred mood that Irish tragic genius, Gustavus V. Brooke,—who had every reason to know, for his life was one of harrowing vicissitude and much sorrow,—declared that "an Irishman is never so happy as when he is in trouble."

One example, in particular, of the merciless perversity with which misfortune pursued Brougham was seen in the episode of Brougham's Theatre. His experience with his Lyceum venture, in 1850, had been painful, for in that he was victimized through his own heedless indiscretion; but his experience with his Theatre venture, in 1869, was wretched and pathetic, for in that he was oppressed by ruthless tyranny and humiliated with bitter disappointment. Brougham's Theatre was opened by him on January 25, 1869,

on the site of the house, in West Twenty-fourth street, now (1807) called the Madison Square. It lasted ten weeks,—until April 3. The plays produced were “Better Late Than Never”; “The Dramatic Review for 1868”; “An Irish Stew”; “A Gentleman from Ireland”; the burlesque of “Pocahontas”; “Jenny Lind”; “Perfection”; “His Last Legs”; and the travesty called “Much Ado About a Merchant of Venice.” On the closing night,—an appropriate choice,—“His Last Legs” was performed, and Brougham made one of those sparkling speeches for which he was remarkable, eliciting much laughter when, humorously referring to the short life of his theatre, he quoted the epitaph on a baby:

Since I so very soon am done for,
I wonder what I was begun for.

It happened that I was present in the green-room of Brougham’s Theatre on the night when the lessee of the house, James Fisk, Jr., came there to decree its dissolution. That autocratic parvenu was flashily dressed, and he carried a thin, black bamboo cane, which he swung wildly in the air as he poured forth upon James Schon-

berg, the stage-manager, a copious torrent of abuse. He seemed to be ashamed of himself, and, naturally, for that reason, he blustered with ever-increasing violence. His piglike countenance was flushed with wrath; his voice was high, thin and shrill. The burden and purport of his speech were conveyed in one sentence, upon which he laid much emphasis. "You have," he said, "been chipping away at my money long enough." Brougham, dressed as the Indian chieftain *Powhatan*, stood before him, grasping the tomahawk that is carried by that imperial savage; and more than once it seemed as though the exasperated warrior was about to make a practical use of that weapon; indeed, he afterward assured me that he was strongly tempted to smite his assailant with it.

James Fisk, Jr., was an uncouth person, from Vermont, who had begun business as a pedler of dry-goods; had become a merchant; had prospered in his affairs; had formed an alliance with the astute Jay Gould to seize the Erie Railroad; and, incidentally, had turned his attention to speculative management of theatres. A more obnoxious individual never imposed himself upon

the stage. He was ultimately shot and killed by one of his quondam associates, in a quarrel about a woman. It would be wasteful to expend many words upon such an interloper, but record of a single incident will illustrate at once his character and his theory of theatrical management. On the night of a private view of Brougham's Theatre, which immediately preceded the opening, and which was given for the information of the newspapers and for the pleasure of the manager's friends, George H. Butler, nephew of General B. F. Butler, of Massachusetts, accosted me on the stage, and, speaking for James Fisk, Jr., whom he then represented, said that, for a very slight service, I could receive an annual salary of twenty-five hundred dollars from that potentate, if I so desired.

The proposal was peculiar, and I made inquiry as to the nature of the service. "Only to keep his name before your readers," said Butler; "only to drop into the paper an occasional paragraph about him; anything pleasantly personal; anything that might do him good. There is no labor in it; all he wants is to have the good-will of the press."

"You can tell Mr. Fisk," I replied, "that I have never been carried in anybody's pocket, and that I don't intend to begin."

Not long afterward, March 31, 1869, at the Grand Opera House, which was then opened, with the play of "The Tempest," under the management of the accomplished and genial Clifton W. Tayleure, I met James Fisk, Jr., and, as he extended his hand to me, turned my back upon him and cut his acquaintance. From that moment I enjoyed his active enmity. He openly declared that he would drive me from the press and from the city; and he earnestly, but unsuccessfully, tried to accomplish that object.

Brougham's Theatre, which ultimately became Daly's Fifth Avenue, was closed because Fisk, Jr., had become interested in certain performers of opera bouffe,—among them Mademoiselle Irma; and the house was immediately devoted to that form of entertainment. Mademoiselle Irma, Mademoiselle Tostée, the graceful and polished Leduc, and other French players appeared there, and revelry prevailed. In the mean time it was felt by the friends of Brougham that he had been

unjustly treated, and it was determined that a demonstration should be made in his favor and for his benefit. The movement took definite shape at a dinner in his honor, given by Charles Stetson, proprietor of the Astor House (a man whom elderly citizens of New York remember as one of the most popular of hosts and most delightful of comrades), on the night of April 4, on which occasion there was assembled in the long parlor of the old Astor one of the brightest and gayest companies ever seen.

A performance for the benefit of Brougham occurred on May 18, gaining for the veteran more than five thousand dollars,—a tribute which I, personally, had the pleasure of placing in his hands, as he was sitting on the stairs, in the lobby of Wallack's (Thirteenth Street) Theatre, afterward the Star; since demolished.

Nine years later, in 1878, when, after much adversity, Brougham had become very poor, another benefit performance, with which I was intimately associated as organizer and worker, was given for his relief, resulting in a receipt of more than ten thousand dollars. That money was in-

vested in an annuity, payable to him quarterly throughout his life; but, unhappily, he died within eighteen months, and the capital reverted to the insurance company. Brougham had unwillingly assented to the arrangement, and later he became bitterly dissatisfied with it, as, when I saw him on his death-bed, I had reason to know. The arrangement was not of my making, nor did it have my approval. Brougham's old professional associates, Lester Wallack and John Gilbert, together with Theodore Moss, treasurer of Wallack's Theatre,—who declared that the money would be seized by Brougham's creditors unless it was in some way secured to him,—insisted on that plan, and compelled the adoption of it. The circumstances are worthy of record as a useful monition to the managers of other benefits. In every case of benefit performance the receipts ought to be given to the beneficiary, entire, at once, and without restriction.

In presence and manner Brougham was singularly fascinating, and socially, in New York, no man of his time was more popular. "Would rather be everybody's friend than anybody's ene-

my," he once wrote of himself, and certainly everybody had a friendly regard for him. His person was five feet eight in height, symmetrical and robust, and his weight, at his best time, was one hundred and eighty. His features were regular and finely formed; his eyes were of a grayish blue, very brilliant, sparkling with mirth and expressive with kindness. His voice was remarkably rich, hearty, and sympathetic. In making curtain speeches (they were always affluent and exhilarating with humor), and often in acting, he spoke very rapidly, his exuberance of genial feeling seeming to overwhelm the words and scatter them before it like leaves upon the wind. As to dress, his taste was fastidious, and in prosperous days his raiment was always aristocratic and elegant. He was, naturally, much followed by the gentler sex, but there was no vanity in his composition, and his way of life was domestic. He was twice married. His first wife, Miss Emma Williams, whom he wedded in England in 1838, was an imperial beauty; but the marriage was not fortunate, as it ended in a separation. The lady subsequently became Mrs. Robertson, and, under

the name of "Mrs. Brougham-Robertson," she made several professional visits to America in later years. To the last she retained her stalwart figure and her formidable appearance, though her beauty had faded. She died in New York in 1865.

The second Mrs. Brougham, whose maiden name was Annette Nelson, was a widow, Mrs. Hodges, when Brougham married her, and I remember her as a woman of fascinating loveliness and sweetly graceful manners. She was the daughter of a captain in the English navy, and was born at Madrid, toward the close of the Peninsular War. Her first appearance on the stage, for which she had been trained by the accomplished Mrs. Bartley (originally Miss Smith, an actress who, in her prime, had been ranked next to the incomparable Mrs. Siddons as *Lady Macbeth*—she acted that part with Edmund Kean, at Drury Lane, in 1816), was made at Covent Garden, London, December 6, 1828, as *Peggy*, in "The Country Girl"—Garrick's alteration of Wycherly's comedy of "The Country Wife." She first appeared in America in 1833,

at New Orleans. For about two months in the autumn of 1836 she managed the Richmond Hill Theatre, New York, and at that time she seems to have been the reigning beauty in thousands of hearts. Brougham married her in 1847. She played a variety of parts, but fascinated more by loveliness than by extraordinary dramatic talent. She died in New York in 1870.

Brougham's death befell in New York, June 7, 1880, at No. 60 East Ninth Street, and he was buried in Greenwood Cemetery. Edwin Booth and I assisted to bear his pall. I remember that the two grave-diggers, after they had lowered his coffin a little way into the grave, were constrained, with many muttered exclamations of "Aize her!" and "Raize her!" to lift it up again, in order to enlarge the cavity. Booth and I, like *Hamlet* and *Horatio*, were standing under a neighboring tree, observing those proceedings, and nothing was ever more wofully comic or more humorously rueful than *Hamlet's* smile, as he looked at me, with those deep, melancholy eyes and with that little, furtive grimace, murmuring, as he did so, "It is the *last recall*." Brougham's grave is be-

side that of his second wife, Annette, whom he devotedly loved, and in memory of whom he had placed a monument. One other grave is in that narrow lot,—that of poor Amy Fawsitt, a young actress from England, who died in New York, destitute, in 1876, and to whose ashes, with the kindness that was natural to him, he gave a place of burial, although in his life she had been a stranger. Brougham's epitaph, written by me, contains these lines:

Humour, that ev'ry sorrow could beguile,
The tear that trembles just beneath the smile,
The soul to pity and the hand to cheer,
Virtue and wit and kindness slumber here.
His look made sunshine whereso'er it shone,
And life is darken'd now that he is gone.

IV.

DION BOUCICAULT.

THERE was a time when, in the dramatic world, the name of Dion Boucicault was a name to conjure with; when the announcement of a new play from his pen aroused keen public curiosity and inspired lively public interest. He was then (about forty-eight years ago) at the meridian of his physical and intellectual vigor, and while that noon of affluent vitality lasted he failed not to attract and satisfy eager expectation. I recall the first performances in America of "Dot," "Smike," "The Octoroon," "The Heart of Midlothian," "The Colleen Bawn," "Arrah-na-Pogue," "The Long Strike," "Kerry," "Daddy O'Dowd" and "The Shaughraun,"—to name only a few of his representative plays,—and I remember that each of them was a pleasure to its audience, and that critical opinion, almost with one accord, while not declaring them faultless,

received them with cordial appreciation and hailed their author as a dramatist of exceptional fertility and skill. He outlived both his powers and his reputation, and he passed away in failure and neglect; but he was a remarkable person, and the chronicle of his career bids fair to remain a permanent chapter in the history of the stage.

Boucicault was a native of Dublin, born about 1822, or perhaps a little earlier. He was named Dionysius, after the scientist, Dionysius Lardner, 1793-1859, to whom, in maturity, he bore a striking personal resemblance. His education was, to some extent, supervised by that philosopher, with the purpose that he should become an architect and civil engineer. He studied at Dublin University and at the University of London. His mental exertions seem not to have been of a robust character at either of those founts of learning. After he had found his way to London he haunted theatres and wrote plays. His theatrical career began when the comedy of "London Assurance" was produced, March 4, 1841, at Covent Garden, by Charles Mathews. His claim to the exclusive

authorship of that comedy was explicitly and successfully disputed by John Brougham, but that is the first play with which his name was associated. At that time he called himself Lee Moreton. The "London Times," March 5, 1841, recorded that "London Assurance" amused its audience, and that at its close "Mr. Lee Moreton, the author, was led forward, eying the enthusiastic multitude with considerable nervousness." The cast of the play, on that occasion, included some of the most admired actors in England. William Farren played *Sir Harcourt Courtly*. Charles Mathews played *Dazzle*. James Anderson played *Charles*. Madame Vestris (Mrs. Mathews), played *Grace*. The beautiful Louisa Nesbitt played *Lady Gay*. Upon the authorship of the comedy a letter, written March 21, 1877, by Benjamin Webster to Squire B. Bancroft, sheds a ray of explanation. "'London Assurance,'" so wrote the veteran actor, "was mine ever since it was written. The plot, originally, was John Brougham's, for which Vestris made Boucicault give him half the proceeds; so that, between one and the other, I paid dearly for it."

Webster, 1798-1882, was manager of the Haymarket Theatre from 1837 to 1853, and, owning the comedy, he might himself have produced it; but his stage was otherwise occupied in 1841, and also he seems to have been willing to encourage young authors and to favor a brother manager.

The heart of "London Assurance" is carnal desire, the spirit of it is sensuality, and the atmosphere of it is imposture. *Sir Harcourt*, a licentious old rake, is a bad copy of *Lord Ogleby* in "The Clandestine Marriage," while *Lady Gay Spanker* is a bad copy of *Constance* in "The Love Chase." With the exception of *Max Harkaway*, a jovial nobody, there is not a normally decent person in the play. Notwithstanding some adversity in the press, however,—particularly from the pen of George Henry Lewes, the distinguished associate of the great novelist, George Eliot,—"London Assurance" prospered; and, cheered by its success, Lee Moreton persevered with assiduous industry as a dramatist. Within the period extending from 1841 to 1853 he produced "The Irish Heiress," "Alma Mater," "Woman," "Old Heads and Young Hearts," "A

School for Scheming," "Confidence," "The Knight of Arva," "The Broken Vow," "The Queen of Spades," "The Vampire,"—in which, June 14, 1852, at the Princess' Theatre, he made his first appearance on the London stage, acting the chief part; "The Prima Donna"; and "Genevieve, or the Reign of Terror."

In 1853 he came to America, and on the New York stage his first appearance was made, at the Broadway Theatre, November 10, 1854, as *Sir Charles Coldstream*, in "Used Up." From that time to almost his latest day of life his pen was seldom idle, nor was he long absent from the scene. Before leaving England he had been twice married. His first wife, a wealthy widow, died suddenly, in Switzerland. His second wife was the lovely Agnes Robertson, one of the most charming players, in *ingénue* parts and in light comedy, who have graced the stage. His American career began with a lecture tour, but he soon reverted to play-writing and acting, and several of his most successful plays, notably "Dot," "Smike," and "The Octoroon," were produced in New York,—the first two based on novels by

Dickens, and the third based on a novel by Captain Mayne Reid. In "Smike" he acted *Mantellini*, and in "The Octoroon" he gave an excellent performance of the Indian, *Wah-no-tee*; but it was not till 1860 when, on March 29, at Laura Keene's Theatre, he produced the first of his Irish dramas, "The Colleen Bawn," that he made his decisive mark as an actor. In that play he impersonated the romantic peasant, *Myles-na-Coppaleen*, a character instinct with Hibernian drollery, and softened and made sympathetic with subtly-tender intimations of a temperament that is half merry, half forlorn, and altogether lovable. With that play and that performance he struck a note of artistic beauty that has not yet ceased to sound; for his rightful fame is that of an author of romantic Irish plays and an actor of romantic, eccentric Irish parts.

"The Colleen Bawn" was based on a tedious novel by Gerald Griffin, 1803-1840, called "The Collegians,"—a variant of a true story of seduction and murder,—from which the ingenious dramatist managed to extract a thread of fresh and pure dramatic action and also characters that

he could suffuse with humor, pathos, and romantic interest. He called it a "Sensation Drama," and then and thus he invented the name that ever since has been used to designate the class of dramas dependent on thrilling situation intensified by means of striking mechanical effect. "Sensation," he once said to me, "is what the public wants, and you cannot give them too much of it." "The Colleen Bawn" is a capital play, of its class, but Boucicault's later Irish plays (excluding "The Rapparee" and "The Amadan," which were failures), exemplify an ascending scale of merit. Those plays are "Arrah-na-Pogue," "Daddy O'Dowd," "Kerry," and "The Shaughran,"—the first produced in 1865; the last in 1874.

About 1859-60 he made the interesting discovery that his ancestry was French, ancient, noble, and aristocratic, and that his name, which had been spelled Bourcicault, ought to be spelled Boucicault; the latter arrangement of "the heroic syllables," accordingly, has ever since prevailed. In that period of his career he was an elegant theatrical beau and man of fashion,—his chief,



DION BOUCICAULT
1822-1890

or only, professional competitors in New York being Lester Wallack and George Jordan, both brilliant comedians and both handsome men. His charming wife, Agnes Robertson, was then with him, and all around him seemed sunshine and joy. No man on the stage of that day had ampler opportunity than Dion Boucicault. The ball of fortune was at his feet. In that day, however, and more or less in all days, there was about him an indefinite, inexplicable something uneasily suggestive of the adventurer and fitfully causative of distrust.

In September, 1860, "The Colleen Bawn" was produced by him in London, where it had, in its first season, 231 consecutive performances, at the Adelphi Theatre. Thereafter Boucicault dwelt sometimes in England and sometimes in America, and in both countries he was generally prosperous during many years. They were years of productive industry in the manufacture of plays. He was a diligent worker.

"Although I rise at six," he once wrote to me, "and work pretty continuously till eleven at night, the day is not long enough to enable me

to include all that I would do, and that I *ought* to do before leaving much-abused but precious life." Particular examination of each of his plays, while illuminative of his industry and of his peculiar dramatic talent,—the talent that extracts movement out of narrative,—would show that, in important respects, he was more adroit than original; that he possessed little, if any, creative faculty; and that there never was an elemental impulse of inspiration in anything that he wrote. Dramatic authorship, indeed, seems to have been regarded by him,—and by many other playwrights,—as a species by itself, exempt from obligation to moral law. The bard who should "convey" Milton's "Lycidas" or Wordsworth's great "Ode," and, after making a few changes in the text and introducing a few new lines, publish it as a composition "original" with himself, would be deemed and designated a literary thief. The dramatist, taking his plots from any convenient source and rehashing incidents and speeches selected from old plays, can publish the fabric thus constructed as "an original drama," and, so far from being discredited,

can obtain reputation and profit by that proceeding.

Boucicault was in the habit of writing his dialogues. He possessed the art of making his interlocutors speak in character, and sometimes he devised remarkably fine, because dramatically, rather than verbally, expressive stage business and effect; as, for example, in the ingenious daguerreotype incident of "The Octoroon," the superb telegraph scene of "The Long Strike," and the schoolroom scene of the "Parish Clerk"; but he scarcely ever invented a plot, and he brought forth as his own many plays that were only adapted from those of other writers. It is a common belief, and it was held by him, that there is a public "want" for various forms of entertainment; that this public "want" undergoes periodical changes; and that the sagacious writer is the one who perceives the current phase of the "want" and promptly ministers to it. In accordance with that belief, using the theatre as the journalist uses the newspaper, to reflect the passing hour and please a supposititious momentary taste, he produced in capricious succession speci-

mens of almost every form of theatrical composition. When "Anonyma" was conspicuous in the London parks he wrote "Formosa"; when horse-racing was especially prevalent he wrote "The Flying Scud" and "The Jilt." Nor did he omit to cheer himself with the erroneous reflection that such was the way pursued by Shakespeare, whose works, however, he chose to believe were written by several hands, amicably collaborating with the bard.

Among the many plays that bear Boucicault's imprint are "The Irish Heiress," "Love in a Maze," "The Dublin Boy," "Grimaldi," "Used Up," "The Willow Copse," "Janet Pride," "Jessie Brown," "How She Loves Him," "The Fox Hunt," "The Old Guard," "Louis XI," "The Corsican Brothers," "The Streets of New York," "Omoo," "To Parents and Guardians," "Presumptive Evidence," "The Cherry Tree Inn," "After Dark," "Hunted Down," "A Dark Night's Work," "Jezebel," "Led Astray," "Mora," "Mimi," "Belle Lamar," "The Man of Honor," "Rescued," and "A Bridal Tour." The sources of several of them will occur to the ex-

perienced playgoer. Boucicault was an omnivorous reader, especially of French plays and novels, and he gathered his material from many sources, never hesitating to appropriate whatever would suit his purpose; but his method of fabrication was exceptionally ingenious. He possessed the French language in perfection: when he acted *Grimaldi*, having to instruct a pupil, he recited French speeches in the manner of Rachel, and he spoke with a purity of accent that was strongly commended; in short, he had command of the whole wide field of French drama and fiction.

His supreme talent was a felicitous dexterity in making a story tell itself in action rather than in words. Jefferson's comment on this subject was illuminative and, though amiably tolerant, not inapt. "If he steals satin," said the kindly comedian, "he embroiders it with silk." Boucicault, indeed, seemed to discern dramatic values by intuition; he could use a sound, a pause, a gesture, a seeming accident, in such a way as to convey in a moment an illustration of meaning or a sympathetic thrill of potential effect, toward

which writers in general can only struggle through a multitude of words. During his lifetime he had more of evanescent popularity than of solid reputation; but he was an expert dramatist, and, as such, he left an abiding impress on the stage.

Many years ago, when Boucicault was on terms of amity with me, I suggested to him that he should write an Autobiography, and that he should collect all the plays that he had written, compiled, or adapted and publish them in a series of volumes, and I offered,—so as to relieve him of the burden of drudgery,—to do the editorial work, writing the prefaces and the notes, and to carry the books through the press, without compensation of any kind. At that time he was conspicuous among contemporary dramatists, and it seemed to me that a complete collection of his works would prove a valuable addition to the printed literature of the drama. He was pleased with that plan, and he expressed his cordial approval of it. We had several colloquies about it, and we expanded it, with a view to incorporate a dissertation by him on the dramatic movement

of the previous fifty years, to be called "The Master of the Revels." Nothing came of that good project, beyond a contribution to the famous calorific pavement mentioned by Doctor Johnson. But long after our talk, and after all thought of my suggestion had ceased, he wrote to me, stating that he had just conceived the idea of writing an Autobiography and collecting his plays, and that he would like to enlist my services as editor of the collection,—thus laying my plan before me as something new and but lately evolved by himself. His mind was of a singular order. "I would like to have a long talk with you," so he wrote, January 18, 1885, "on many subjects; particularly on the publication of my dramatic works. I think there are about fifty comedies, dramas and melodramas worthy of leaving behind me in good shape. They would make about ten volumes, when intercalated with my reminiscences surrounding each play, forming a literary Life as well as a collection of dramatic works and a history of half a century. I have been collecting the materials, but I am a poor hand at shaping anything but a play."

I could not then entertain the proposal, and his works, existent in a fragmentary condition, have not as yet (1908), been collected.

Boucicault often wrote to me, and his letters were characteristic. This is one of them:

O Winter, thou'rt well nam'd, for thou dost come
But once a year! How, in these piping times,
Have we not long'd for thee, thou Genial Soul!
Keen in thy breath, sometimes, but with a heart
Glowing and full of love for all things good!

You bid me tell the story of my life,
And wonder why I am so loath to speak.
Full of things good thy life has been, and thou
Canst wander happily amongst the Past;
But so it is not with us all; but few
Leave seeds of good behind them, as they go,
From which sweet-smelling memories do grow.

I'm ill at these numbers. Let us go to prose.
Can you dine with me on Monday next, at five, at
Pinard's? . . . There will be only Kate,
you and me. Do put aside anything you have to
do, on that occasion, and give me yourself.

Yours sincerely,

DION' BOUCICAULT.

Pinard's restaurant, over which Boucicault inhabited a particularly cozy and comfortable lodg-

ing, was, in its day, one of the most select, cheerful, delightful resorts in New York. Its situation was Number 20 East Fifteenth Street. It disappeared long ago; new buildings have replaced the old ones, and time has changed the aspect and character of the neighborhood; but Pinard's has not been forgotten. Many boon companions met there. Many happy hours were passed there. Only to mention the place is to hear kind voices that have long been silent, and to see many a smiling face that smiles no more.

Boucicault's beguiling way of viewing theatrical affairs was, within my experience of him, frequently exemplified. "If I had to criticise my works," he once wrote to me, "I think I should go further than you have done in the way of severity. Some of these days I must give you some of my bitter experience of the base coin exacted by the public, in payment of duties on popularity and success. If we are to found a native American drama it can only be done by the collusion of the dramatists and the press."

Writing to me March 23, 1883, he said:

. . . "I had hoped that the reopening of

Wallack's Theatre would be regarded by the press as an interesting event, seeing that Booth's is going into trade.

"I advocate reserving the Star Theatre for first-class stars only—*quasi*: Booth, Jefferson, Salvini, Irving, Modjeska, John McCullough, the Kendals, etc., and the production of such dramas as 'The Silver King,' which might be reserved for 'the blanks' in the season, caused by the intermission of stars. Thus Wallack's Theatre, purged of melodrama, would be reserved for high comedy and domestic drama of the better kind.

"But Lester goes after other gods and the flesh-pots of the Bowery. It may seem strange that *I* should advocate purism at Wallack's, after introducing sensational effects!"

It did seem "strange," considering that it was Dion Boucicault who had caused Lester Wallack to disgrace Wallack's Theatre,—the home of high Comedy—by producing in it the tainted play of "Forbidden Fruit." I had not, however, at that time learned that Boucicault was, morally, a charlatan. It is remarked by *King Henry VIII*, in

Shakespeare's play, that "'Tis a kind of good deed to *say* well." Boucicault could "say well," but no moral scruple ever deterred him, or ever could have deterred him, from taking "the instant way" to personal advantage and pecuniary profit.

His letter continues:

"The comedy 'Vice Versa' was inspired by a French farce, which I have elaborated into a play of somewhat more pretence. However, it has one merit for you—its fun is innocent. It is rollicking animal spirits, and I question if it be more improbable than 'London Assurance.' I hope you will be well enough to get to town on Monday to see it, and to welcome back the English drama to its old home.

"Ever sincerely yours,

"DION BOUCICAULT."

In the spring of 1888 an illiterate speculator, from Boston, named John Stetson, had temporary control of Booth's Theatre, which was finally closed on April 30 of that year. Wallack's Theatre had been built, at the northeast corner of Broadway and Thirtieth Street, and the earlier

Wallack's, at the northeast corner of Broadway and Thirteenth Street, having been for a while styled the Germania, was opened, March 26, as the Star: it has since been demolished.

Boucicault had studied Wycherly, Congreve, Vanbrugh, Farquhar, and Sheridan, and he had learned how to write neat dialogue. His equivocal was clever, and his writing, like his talk,—and, indeed, like his personality,—was colored with a dry, droll humour. The play of “Vice Versa” affords some examples of his verbal volatility. The part that he acted in it is *Mr. Fhenix O'Flattery*, of Bally-na-Cuish. “Nature made me susceptible,” says *Mr. O'Flattery*. “I yielded to Nature.” “She was not a woman,” he exclaims; “she was a whirlpool.” On being told that “discretion is the *better* part of valor,” he answers: “It is the *whole* of it—in *my* constitution.” “It is the fools who prosper with the women,” he declares; “they give their whole minds to it.” “I am ready to turn my hand to anything,” says a gay young woman. “Lovely hand!” exclaims an old beau; “I wish she would turn it to *me*.” Airy levity is characteristic of his dialogue. He was aware of the charm of

such representative Irish characters as Lever's *Harry Lorrequer* and *Charles O'Malley*, and in his lighter mood, whether as a dramatist or as an actor, he strove to emulate that charm. Sometimes his pleasantry is forced: "I heard an impatient bottle of champagne take an early cue." "Wit" of that sort is abundant in "London Assurance." The reader must pass to his Irish dramas in order to find him at his best.

In "Arrah-na-Pogue" the dialogue is exceptionally terse, sparkling, pungent, and expressive. In "The Shaughraun" it is even more fluent, compact, forcible, and happy, being profusely illumined with gems of Hibernian humour. Those plays excel, also, in dramatic climax and in admirable portraiture of the caprice, complexity, variety, and inexplicable charm of the nature of woman. In drama Boucicault's supreme achievements are the ticking of the telegraph, in "The Long Strike"; the midnight farewell of the schoolmaster, in "The Parish Clerk"; the incident of *Jessie's* concealment of the broken floor, in "Jessie Brown"; the heroic self-sacrifice of *Shaun*, in "Arrah-na-Pogue"; the sentinels in the open-

ing scene of "Belle Lamar"; and the pathetic situation wherein the poor old father learns that his son's honor has been vindicated, in "Daddy O'Dowd." As an actor Boucicault will be remembered chiefly for his impersonation of *Conn*, in "The Shaughraun." That play was original with him, in every respect. The best performance that he ever gave was that of *Daddy O'Dowd*,—a performance that completely illuminated the entire method of his acting. He was himself as cold as steel, but he knew the emotions by sight, and he mingled them as a chemist mingles chemicals; generally, with success.

The student who closely examines the order of mind that produces practical works in the department of Drama can hardly escape the impression that, whatever the excellence of its achievements, that order of mind does not, in general, possess, positive, salient, self-centred, formidable character; that it is, in a certain sense, insubstantial; that it is a medium; that it is analogous to a sieve, or the strings of a wind-harp, which are inoperative and incommunicative, until the wind blows through them. The exclusively dramatic mind is

certainly objective and it certainly seems to be constitutionally impersonal. Dion Boucicault's mind was of that description. He transmitted the ideas, thoughts, and feelings that came to him; he did not assimilate them. Every influence around him affected him. He was sensitive to every touch of floating fancy or popular caprice. Most of his plays were prompted by example,—at first that of Farquhar. Much of his acting was imitative,—at first of Charles Mathews, later of Joseph Jefferson. His *Kerry* was a copy of a French performance, in “*La Joie Fait Peur*,” by Regnier. His *Shaughraun* was, in spirit and drift, an Irish copy of Jefferson's *Rip Van Winkle*,—an impersonation that Jefferson invented long before Boucicault remodelled the play that was its vehicle; though it pleased the dramatist, eventually, to conclude and impudently to declare that he had both created *Rip* and fashioned Jefferson. His *Daddy O'Dowd* was an Irish copy of Frederick Robson's *Sampson Burr*, in “*The Porter's Knot*,” —“*Les Crochets du Père Martin*. But judgment was unreasonable toward Boucicault, in ex-

pecting him to justify contemporaneous admiration and posthumous homage by being an original, unique, stalwart, potential individuality. He possessed an exceptional faculty for devising dramatic machinery, and he intuitively grasped the essence of movement in any subject that he touched. His Irish plays, in particular, possess an extraordinary vitality, and of almost all his plays it can truly be said that they live and have a being of their own; but, personally, he was as vaporous as a cloud.

Boucicault's estimate of himself was favorable. In that respect he did not differ from the generality of mankind. Writing to me, in 1877, he said:

"I am not independent of the opinion of a sincere and good man—the tribute of his sympathetic heart and of his brain. . . . I do not make a public show of my emotions. . . . I speak of a man as I find him, and always to his face. . . . I may not be a genial man, nor deal in loud professions of affection and offers of service; but I am a square and honest one, owing no man any-

thing—except to the very few who are above flattery and far above sycophancy.”

To those assurances he was pleased to add another, which, after many years, and remembering that we eventually became estranged, I have a melancholy pleasure in preserving: “There are but few men,” he wrote, “whose good opinion I desire to have—none more than I do yours. I have ever entertained for you the highest respect and sincere admiration.”

In person and aspect Boucicault was peculiar rather than attractive, or, if attractive, the characteristic in him that gained attention was singularity. His figure was of medium height, originally slender, but in his later years inclined to heaviness. He was bald; his face was oval and not long; his eyes, which were of a brown-gray color, were set somewhat near together, and the habitual expression of them was keen, shrewd, vigilant, and crafty. He had a small mouth and a narrow, retreating chin. His voice was singularly dry and hard, and yet it could well convey the accent of bland, persuasive, sagacious Irish blarney. In repose his countenance was impas-

sive and thoughtful, but, under excitement, it could assume,—and did so,—an expression of signal malignity. He was not a good friend, but he was an exceedingly good hater. In a far-off way, and because he was bald and had an oval face, he looked a little like the picture of Shakespeare, and he was not averse to the cultivation of that resemblance. There is an anecdote to the effect that once, in a New York newspaper office, he met with two literary acquaintances, both of whom were bald and had smooth-shaven, oval faces (one of them was John D. Stockton, of Philadelphia, a clever man, long since dead, a fine chess-player, a sparkling writer, and a wit), and that Boucicault facetiously remarked: "If Shakespeare were to come in here now he positively could not tell which of us is the Bard." "But," said Stockton, "if we all began to *write* he would soon find out."

Judgment, as remarked by Dr. Johnson, is not dependent on the will. Dion Boucicault, as a man, was vain, self-indulgent, shallow, fickle, and weak. Also, like some other Irishmen of renown, he was unfortunate in a propensity to strife. He

had success in his public career, alike as actor and dramatist; but, valuing himself very highly, he was seldom, if ever, satisfied with the recognition that he received, and he lived in almost continual antagonism toward either institutions or individuals. His character was neither great, noble nor lovely. The more his life is examined the more does it reveal vanity of motive and selfishness of conduct.

One of his latest acts was to publish a letter denying his marriage with Agnes Robertson to whom the English Court awarded a decree of divorce from him, in 1888, and thus seek to cast a blight of disgrace upon his wife and children. He was essentially little. He assumed greatness, and he became embittered because intellectual men of his time did not recognize him at his own high valuation. The qualities that made him important to the stage, and thus to society, were not moral qualities; still less were they spiritual. In looking back upon his career, toward the last, he was fond of imputing to himself a ministry of fine ideals and a devotion to high things; but, in fact, while that career was passing

he was a man of the moment, and he rose no higher than the expediency of the time. His intellect was feverishly active; his spirit was exceedingly restless; his self-esteem was inordinate; he was painfully sensitive to opinion, although he affected to despise it, and he seemed perpetually on the watch for affronts. In his better days, if in a kindly mood, he could be, and he sometimes was, an entertaining companion, for he had seen something of the world; he had known and observed many interesting persons; he liked to please; he was responsive to sympathetic acceptance; and his talk was shrewd with observation, gay with caustic pleasantry, bright with anecdote, and animated with satirical comment,—which his harsh, dry, biting voice made peculiarly incisive,—on a variety of themes. The kindly mood with him, however, was not habitual. His pride of intellect made him contemptuous of most persons, and his usual mental attitude was that of secret scorn, implied by satirical indifference. His demeanor toward professional subordinates was seldom civil, often tyrannical and harsh; so that in the theatre, as a rule, he was

cordially disliked. The public he flattered—and despised. In his personal likes and dislikes he was so capricious that, upon the minds of those who knew him best and valued him most, he produced the impression of radical insincerity. He was a singular being; a man of brilliant mind and expert achievement; a man to whom fortune gravitated, and to whom everything was given that successful worldly men usually value; yet he was one to whom neither love nor friendship could long adhere. His youth was precocious, adventurous, luxurious; his manhood was fortunate, self-indulgent, arrogant; his age was lonely and miserable; and, as a whole, his life,—notwithstanding its flurries of wealth and popularity,—was unhappy. The retrospection of it affords a melancholy spectacle: for, what does it signify that a man has written a clever book, or made a brilliant speech, or pleased an audience with a fine dramatic performance, if, when the sod has closed over his ashes, nobody thinks of him with a sigh or cares to place a flower on his grave!

V.

CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN.

As I write the name of Charlotte Cushman the tide of time rolls backward and I am young again. That great actress dominated the American stage in the middle of the nineteenth century, and when, in memory, I summon the dramatic figures that have most deeply impressed themselves on my imagination and feelings, one of the earliest and most prominent and vital is that of the *Meg Merrilies* of Charlotte Cushman. It was my fortune often to see Miss Cushman on the stage before I became personally acquainted with her, and, in later times, after we had met and she had honored me with her friendship, I never neglected an opportunity of seeing and hearing her, whether as actress or reader. She was not a theatrical beauty. She neither employed, nor made pretence of employing, the soft allurements of her sex. She was incarnate power: she domi-

nated by intrinsic authority: she was a woman born to command: and of such minds as comprehend authentic leadership she achieved immediate, complete and permanent conquest. There was, in her personality, a massive excellence that made admiration natural, and entirely justified it. She was not only a great actress but a great woman. As such she impressed me from the first, and as such I always extolled her. One day, in Booth's Theatre, where it happened that John McCullough, Charlotte Cushman and I were standing together, in conversation, she suddenly seized my arm with her left hand, and, pointing upward with her right, she said, earnestly and simply, to McCullough: "I like William Winter, because he puts me *up*—where I belong!"

That was not said in conceit. Genius is seldom unconscious of its superiority. The poet Wordsworth believed, and did not hesitate to declare, that he had been celestially consecrated to the vocation of poetry, and that his neglect of his vocation would be a sin. "You don't know what a capital actor you are," exclaimed a friend-

ly admirer, speaking to the comedian, Charles Burke. "You are mistaken," answered Burke; "I know precisely what a capital actor I am, and precisely what I can do." Charlotte Cushman knew her powers, and when she was on the stage she justified, to the fullest extent, the esteem in which they were held, by herself as well as by others. Human beings sometimes appear who are intrinsically great and admirable,—just as the ocean is, or the starlit midnight sky. Charlotte Cushman, like Henry Irving, grandly illustrated the truth of Shakespeare's saying, "In the reproof of chance lies the true proof of men"; for she left nothing to chance, and she made impotent the caprice of all observers. You might resent her dominance, and shrink from it, calling it "masculine"; you could not doubt her massive reality nor escape the spell of her imperial power. She was a tall woman, of large person and of commanding aspect, and in her demeanor, when she was thoroughly aroused, there was an innate grandeur of authority that no sensitive soul could resist. I recall a night, in Booth's Theatre, when she was acting *Queen Katharine*, in "Henry



CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN
From a Photograph by Gutekunst

VIII," and I, an auditor, was sitting, alone, in a lower box, almost on the stage. As the Queen turned to make her exit from the trial,—after the heart-breaking delivery of her noble and pathetic appeal to *King Henry*,—she advanced directly toward the box in which I sat, and, looking straight forward, regardless of all around her, seemed to fix her gaze steadfastly upon *me*. At that moment the Queen is recalled, and her attendant usher, retreating backward before her, tells her of the summons. "When *you* are called, return!" exclaims the indignant monarch. As she said those words her figure towered and her large, lurid eyes (they were gray-blue, but at times they darkened with emotion), seemed to shoot forth a burning torrent of light. She moved steadily onward—the incarnation of royalty; and so tremendous was the majesty of her presence and so awful the mingled anguish, dignity and passion in her countenance that, with involuntary motion, I fairly shrunk away to the rear of the box, overwhelmed, astounded, and quite oblivious that this was a dramatic performance and not a reality. It was a great moment. She needed

great moments on the stage, and when they came she invariably filled them. It is not meant that she acted for points; her performances were always of a uniform fabric, symmetrical, coherent, lucid, distinct; but whenever the occasion arrived for liberated power, passionate feeling, poetic significance, dramatic effect, she rose to that occasion and made it superb. Nothing has been seen, since her time, to surpass her appalling impartment of predestinate evil and sinister force in the scenes that lead up to the murder of the *King*, in "Macbeth." When she said, in those deep, thrilling, pitiless tones, "He that's coming must be provided for," and when, with wild, roving, inspired glances, comprehending earth and air, she invoked the angels of crime ("you murdering ministers, *wherever* in your sightless substances you wait on Nature's mischief"), the blood of the listener was chilled with the horror of her infernal purpose, fiend-driven and inspired of hell. There were other great moments in her personation of *Lady Macbeth*—a personation which, to this day, remains unequalled: among them, her profoundly reverential greeting to

King Duncan, on his arrival at the Castle of Inverness; her magnificently royal bearing in the interrupted banquet scene; her desolation—the immedicable, hopeless agony of a lost soul—in the pathetic scene of haunted sleep; but throughout her temptation of *Macbeth* and in her conduct of the murder she diffused, as no other representative of the part in our time has done, the awe-inspiring, preternatural horror which is the spirit of that great tragedy,—the most weird, portentous, sinister, afflicting work of poetic imagination that the brain of man has produced.

Miss Cushman was not prone to the critical custom, so common of late years, of refining on Shakespeare's meaning, and thus reading subtle significations into his text. She perceived and imparted the obvious meaning, and her style was strong, definite, bold and free: for that reason some observers described it as "melo-dramatic." She did not make long pauses and stare fixedly at nothing, as Madame Sarah Bernhardt does; nor did she wander to the back drop and whisper to the scenery, after the manner, supposedly inspired, of Madame Eleonora Duse. She had

always a distinct purpose, and that purpose she distinctly executed. Addressing Edwin Booth, when they were rehearsing "Macbeth," she said: "Your performance is exceedingly interesting, but *Macbeth* was the great-grandfather of all the Bowery ruffians." Booth's ideal of *Macbeth*,—which, to me, was true,—seemed to impress her as neither sufficiently massive nor sufficiently simple. A man who invites a friend to sleep at his house, and, after his confiding guest has gone to repose, steals into his chamber and cuts his throat, is an atrocious murderer; and, probably, she desired, first of all, the clear denotement of that basic truth. *Impersonation* was the primary fact for which she stipulated and at which she aimed. "The actors who come on for *Macbeth*," she once said to me, "are, usually, such *little* men: I have to look down at them." She meant, as I understood her, that they were not only of small stature, but that their presentment of that great part was, to her apprehension, puny. But, though she insisted on the basis of fact in acting, she was not mindless of the essential spirit of poetry. In each of her supreme performances, which were

Lady Macbeth, Queen Katharine and *Meg Merrilies*, that spirit suffused the impersonation and made it radiant with intrinsic light. The part that she preferred to act was *Queen Katharine*; for she was of a deeply sympathetic temperament, and the tender human feeling, the pathos, and the woman-like loveliness of that character touched her heart and aroused all the enthusiasm of her moral nature; but, potent as she was in the realm of feeling, she was still more potent in the realm of imagination; and to my remembrance her *Meg Merrilies*, while not the highest ideal of human nature to which she gave an embodiment, was the one achievement that immediately and wholly revealed her distinctive, unique individualism. She first acted that part in 1887, when she was only twenty-one years old, but she always retained it in her repertory. She was higher, broader, larger, stronger than the part; she descended upon it; she acted it with consummate ease and fluency; she liberated into it a frenzy of the imagination, the nervous system, and the physical energies, blending poetic stress of feeling with a cumulative continuity of action, like

the wild sweep of the tempest; and thus she made it magnificent and irresistible. The character, as drawn by Sir Walter Scott, in his novel of "Guy Mannering," is somewhat fantastic and a little touched with insanity. The actress made it consistently superior and romantic, investing it with the fanatical purpose of his *Magdalen Graeme*, in "The Abbot," together with the inspirational emotion and prophetic grandeur of his *Norna*, in "The Pirate." The attributes of Miss Cushman's performance were romance, tenderness, pathos, profound knowledge of grief, and the authentic royalty of innate power. It was a creation of wild excitement, wavering reason and physical misery, incident upon frequent famine and years of habitual hardship, the compulsory recollection of a terrible crime committed by others, lonely communing with the haunting mysteries of Nature, and a rooted devotion to one purpose of sacred duty and love. At the moment, in the play, when *Meg Merrilies* encounters *Bertram* in the gipsy camp, at night, Miss Cushman made an entrance of felicitous dexterity and startling effect,—thrusting back the folds of a tent and

suddenly projecting herself from the aperture, but doing this in such a manner that she occupied exactly her right place in the dusky, romantic stage picture, before any except an expert observer could discern whence she came or how she got there; and the figure that she then presented,—gaunt, haggard, disheveled, piteous and yet majestic, a veritable incarnation of all that is ominous, fateful and strangely beautiful,—was a vision to register itself at once in the memory and there to remain forever. It was in that scene that she crooned the lullaby of the Bertrams of Ellangowan; and human ears have not heard a more touching cadence than when her voice trembled and broke, in that simple, tender, fitful melody.

Charlotte Cushman could be playful, and sometimes was so,—as when she read, with abundant comic effect, Mrs. M. M. Dodge's skit called "Miss Maloney on the Chinese Question"; but notwithstanding her sense of humor, her simplicity could, sometimes, be drolly mystified. Circumstances that attended her final farewell of the New York stage, in 1874, afford an example.

The performance and the ceremonies incident to that farewell occurred at Booth's Theatre, then managed by Messrs. H. C. Jarrett and H. D. Palmer, whose business representative was Joseph H. Tooker, brother-in-law of Florence, the comedian, and, I believe, one of the "braves" of Tammany Hall. It was from Mr. Tooker that I received an account of a preliminary conversation between H. D. Palmer and Charlotte Cushman, which took place in his presence, and which I then recorded:

"I see that you have announced my farewell appearance, Mr. Palmer," said the actress. "I did not quite intend that, at this time. I shall not at once retire."

"The announcement is only of your farewell appearance in New York, Miss Cushman," answered Palmer. "The public will be deeply interested. There will be a splendid house; and, you know, you are not obliged to make it *final*."

"That makes a difference, of course. But this is a very serious matter. What are you going to do for *me*?"

"R. H. Stoddard, the poet, is to write an ode

for the occasion, which will be read on the stage, after the performance; and we shall engage the fine elocutionist, Charles Roberts, Jr., to read it."

"A good plan. Mr. Stoddard is truly a poet. I am not acquainted with the reading of Mr. Roberts. But it is a good plan."

"The venerable William Cullen Bryant has consented to deliver an address, in behalf of the Arcadian Club, which, you know, is made up of clever men."

"I shall, indeed, be honored. Mr. Bryant is a great poet. But—what are you going to do for *me*?"

"The Arcadian Club will send a laurel crown, to be presented to you on the stage, and we shall ask all the actors who happen to be in the city to assemble around you. Boucicault and Jefferson will be there, and Wallack, and Gilbert, and many others."

"Yes, but——"

"And then, of course, *you* will deliver a speech."

"I suppose so. It would be expected. But what——"

"Two hundred members of the Arcadian Club, with lighted torches, will escort you, attending your carriage, from the theatre to the Fifth Avenue Hotel, and there will be a band of musicians of the Ninth Regiment of the New York Militia."

"They are indeed kind, those gentlemen. It will be very pleasant. But, my dear Mr. Palmer, what are you going to do for *me*?"

"And after you reach your hotel you will take your stand on the balcony, where we shall be with you, and there will be a magnificent display of fireworks in the Madison Square Park, in your honor.

"That will be fine. I like the fireworks. But, Mr. Palmer—*what* are you going to do for *ME*?"

"Well, Miss Cushman, we are going to give you \$1000 *extra for that night*."

"Noble boy! Noble boy!!"

The play was "Macbeth." George Vandenhoff acted *Macbeth*. Miss Cushman acted *Lady Macbeth*. As I entered the theatre Mr. Tooker gave to me a packet containing the programme, the ode, the address, and Miss Cushman's "im-

promptu" farewell speech, already printed,—a complete and interesting record of the brilliant occasion. The house was crowded. The acting, in the chief parts, was excellent. They dropped the green curtain after the famous sleep-walking scene,—to the disgust of Mr. Vandenhoff, who was thus deprived of some of *Macbeth's* fine speeches, his fight, and his death,—but presently they raised it again, to disclose a stage populous with actors, and Miss Cushman in a gray silk dress, and the venerable Bryant, and everything as promised. The great actress spoke with much feeling—from memory; but she somewhat dashed the grief of her auditors by assuring them of her purpose to return to the stage, as a reader, at no distant day. Late that night I saw and spoke with Mr. Tooker. "We had the procession, too," he said. "We hired supers to carry the 'Arcadian' torches. Miss Cushman was delighted. The fireworks were great. They were a lot left over from a Tammany celebration, and they cost us little or nothing. The last piece was a mammoth portrait bust. 'Mr. Tooker,' she said, 'who is that?' 'Miss Cushman,' I replied, 'that is

Shakespeare. 'Splendid!' she exclaimed. . . .
It was a colossal head of old Boss Tweed!"

The period of a generation has elapsed since Charlotte Cushman died. If she were still living she would be ninety years old. Her life extended from 1816 to 1876. She was on the stage, intermittently, for about forty years: 1835 to 1875. As a girl she studied music, and it was intended that her career should be that of a singer. She early attracted the favorable notice of the accomplished, beautiful and celebrated vocalist, Mrs. Mary Anne Wood, and she was taught by James G. Maeder, whom I remember as an excellent musician and an amiable man,—the husband of Clara Fisher, that prodigy of talent and fascination, extraordinary both as singer and actress. She appeared at the Tremont Theatre in Boston, as *Countess Almaviva*, in "The Marriage of Figaro," and her vocalism was highly approved; but an injudicious use of her voice marred that organ, for singing, and so she determined to become an actress. The injury to her voice, not such as impaired it for speaking, occurred at New Orleans, whither she had gone with Mr. and Mrs.

Maeder. Caldwell, the pioneer of theatrical enterprise in the southwestern part of the Republic, was then the manager of the chief theatre there, and by him an opportunity was provided for her to act. She appeared as *Lady Macbeth*, thus beginning at the top (as, long afterward, she advised the beautiful and brilliant actress, Mary Anderson, to do), but she soon became associated with stock companies in Eastern theatres, and in that way she acquired proficiency in her art. She had seen Cooper and Mrs. Powell,—actors who maintained the tradition of the stately Kembles,—and she had, insensibly, acquired something of the majestic Kemble style. In the famous old Park Theatre, in New York, she was associated with Mrs. Richardson (Elizabeth Jefferson, aunt of Joseph Jefferson), and from that polished actress she obtained knowledge of a remarkably fine artistic method. There, likewise, she acted with Macready and gained the approbation of that great tragedian. In her twenty-ninth year she acted in London, making a decisive hit as *Bianca*, in “Fazio”; and thereafter her ascendancy in the public esteem speedily became assured,

on both sides of the ocean. Her subsequent career was divided between America and Europe. At the age of thirty-six she first announced her purpose to leave the stage, but she did not retire till many years later; and, after she ceased to act, she continued to appear as a reader,—her last public appearance having been made, in 1875, at Easton, Pennsylvania.

In social hours, Miss Cushman, while never undignified, was eager, genial, cordial, sometimes even frolicsome; never pompous, never dull. In mixed companies composed of strangers or casual acquaintances, when, as often happened, she was the centre of attention, she was careful, without the least ostentation of courtesy, to notice every person present, and she had the delightful tact of saying the right word at the right time. It happened to me to witness the first meeting that took place between Miss Cushman and the eccentric sage, Horace Greeley, and I remember that she was especially felicitous in the compliment that she paid to him,—expressing the artist's thankful sense of security when great intellects are devoted to the practical affairs of the world.

That meeting occurred at the home of Mr. Greeley's sister, Mrs. Cleveland, in a cottage in one of the roads that branch from Bleecker Street, west of Broadway, New York. Mr. Greeley arrived early, and seated himself on a sofa, confronting a throng of admirers. Miss Cushman presently came, and, after the ripples of greeting had subsided, she occupied a chair opposite to the philosopher. The lions viewed each other with curiosity, and both were affable. They had lived in Rome, and, of course, they did not lack for themes of conversation. Little was said about the stage; though I remember that there was mention of the celestial privilege enjoyed by an actor, when occupied in the interpretation of the Immortal Bard. To me that encounter was not without its droll side, for I knew that the sage was comparatively ignorant of the theatre, and practically indifferent to it. Early in 1865, when I was employed to write about the stage for his paper, the New York Tribune, Horace Greeley said to me: "I don't care for the the-ay-ter" (so he pronounced it); "I sometimes go into Wallack's the-ay-ter, but I don't see much

in it"; and I remember that once, on a busy night in the newspaper, when I presented an article about a play, his self-illuminative answer was: "Oh, *that'll* do *any* time." He was "a self-made man"; and one peculiarity of men so constructed is that they look with a kind of bland toleration upon the arts. But Horace Greeley was a man of brains; he could appreciate a splendid character; and he appreciated Charlotte Cushman.

The alluring attribute in Miss Cushman was originality. She was not like other people, whether as woman or actress. On the stage her demeanor and speech had always the superiority and charm of a distinctive style. Every performance that she gave was studded with jewels of illuminative art. When, as *Lady Macbeth*, she had reached the door of the *King's* chamber, grasping the gory daggers, she made a slight pause, and she said the awful words that follow,— "The sleeping and the dead are but as pictures,"— not to *Macbeth*, but to herself. The tone in which, as *Queen Katharine*, she adjured her waiting-woman,— "When I am dead, let me be used with honor,"— would have drawn tears from a



heart of stone. Her voice, when, as poor old *Meg Merrilies*, she proclaimed that her ghost would haunt the lonely dell which she long had made her home, had in it an unearthly music that made the nerves thrill and the brain tremble. In private life she did not, as was said of Mrs. Siddons, "stab the potatoes"; but wherever she went her personality made itself felt. Addressing me, on February 24, 1877, her intimate friend and posthumous biographer, Miss Emma Stebbins, who had known her long and loved her dearly (perhaps the most intimate friend she ever had), wrote these words: "I have always thought your writings and notices of Miss Cushman showed the truest knowledge and appreciation of her of any I have ever seen, and I believe you revered and respected her heartily as a woman, as well as understood her as an artist," That belief was justified. One of my priceless relics is a golden tortoise-shell snuffbox, once owned by Lord Byron, given to me, as a Christmas present, by Henry Irving; and in it I keep a lock of the hair of Charlotte Cushman, cut from her head, after death, by her affectionate negro servant, Sallie

Mercer, together with a lock of the hair of the greatest of all female actors recorded in history, Sarah Siddons. It was a privilege to know such a woman. It is a comfort to think of her. The story of Miss Cushman's labor, vicissitudes and endurance; the splendid courage with which she held her steadfast course, confronting disaster, sickness and a fatal disease; the integrity of her purpose; the fidelity of her life; the simplicity and beauty of her daily conduct; the magnanimity of her spirit; the loftiness of her thoughts; and the invariable nobility of her nature and her deeds, should be read by every member of the dramatic profession: for Charlotte Cushman's example was glorious—and there never was a time when actors needed a glorious example more than they do now, when their great art has largely fallen into the hands of hucksters, and the theatre has been turned into a treadmill.

My last interview with Charlotte Cushman occurred at the Parker House, in Boston, a little while before her death. The tragedian, John McCullough, went with me to call on her, and we were received in her parlor, where she talked with

us for some time. It was a cold, clear, bright morning, and the room was flooded with sunshine. Miss Cushman was sitting in a large armchair—her sober raiment in perfect order, her person propped with cushions, and her right arm, strapped and sustained with bandages, resting upon a board. Her face was thin and pale; her hair was very gray; and her eyes, always brilliant, were illumined now with a strange lustre,—the spectral light of another world. The disquietude, the continual sense of pain, the feverish alertness commingled with languor, and the patient effort at composure which I had so often seen her express in the scene between *Queen Katharine* and *Griffith*, she now, unconsciously, expressed in her own condition. It seemed to me evident that her strength was nearly exhausted, that her vitality was almost wholly that of the indomitable spirit, and that her last hour on earth must, indeed, be close at hand; and yet there was, in her intellectual poise, a force that seemed invincible. The disease from which she suffered was cancer—the same cruel disease that sapped the life of her illustrious predecessor on the American stage, Mary

Duff. She had long battled with that enemy; she knew her danger. But at this time she was not in expectancy of death. On the contrary, she was confident of a speedy recovery. A local physician had persuaded her that he was possessed of an infallible remedy, and to this she had resorted. "He is a young man," she said, "and he has the face of a discoverer. As soon as I saw him, I had confidence in him. He will *assuredly* cure me." She spoke freely of her condition. She described the inroads of the disease, intimating that she deemed it hereditary, and saying that she had taken all possible precautions against it—resorting to extreme exercises, by which she had hardened herself and made her muscles like steel. Then, slightly lowering her voice, she said, with intensely earnest expression and deep solemnity: "I shall not die of this disease. If I thought I had to perish in that way I would not *endure* it—I would myself end my life." Those were her exact words. They made, I know, a deep impression on my mind, for her voice was that of invincible resolution, and her countenance, radiant with spiritual ecstasy, disclosed the full stature of her

unconquerable will. She did not so perish. She incautiously went for a walk, and took cold, and a sudden attack of pneumonia caused her death, on February 18, 1876, only twenty days after that conversation and our final parting—which then befell. She was in the sixtieth year of her age. Her grave is in Mount Auburn Cemetery, in a place selected by herself, on a hill that commands a distant view of the old city of Boston, where she was born, and with which her illustrious name will always be associated in reverential love.

To a thoughtful reader the question will inevitably occur, with reference to Miss Cushman, as with reference to every other actor: What was accomplished by her for the benefit of the world? It is only in that point of view that any career is important,—for the need of mankind is, not to be astounded by personal cleverness, but to be cheered, encouraged and helped. The assertion of an individual prominence amounts to nothing. Alexander the Great is great to us only in so far as he does us any good. Unless the actor, or other artist, imparts something of mental and spiritual value to others, some aid in the conduct

of life, he is unimportant to them. Egotism is barren. Miss Cushman was not an egotist. She thought of her duty as an intellectual leader and exemplar; and in all that she undertook she wrought for the benefit of society. She not only acted great parts, but, in acting them, she gave something to her auditors. She imparted to them a conception of noble individuality and an incentive to noble behavior. She told them that they also were of an immortal spirit; that it was their duty to live pure lives; to do right; to endure with fortitude; and to look onward with hope and trust. She did not fill their minds with images of decadence and promptings to degeneracy, recklessness and failure. She was a minister of the beautiful; and therefore she was a benefactor to her time and to all the times that are to follow. It is difficult to convey an adequate sense of the mental, moral and artistic superiority that she exemplified, or the inspiring influence that she exerted. Within the last thirty years several female actors have been distinguished in tragedy on the American stage, many beautiful women have appeared, and displays have been

made of genius and ability in various lines of dramatic art; but of opulent power, in acting, such as was manifested, at certain supreme moments, in the *Othello* of Forrest, the *Lear* of Booth, the *Virginius* of McCullough, the *Cassius* of Barrett, and the *Lady Macbeth* of Charlotte Cushman, the audience of the present day has seldom seen a suggestive example. The contemporary American stage is fortunate, as to actresses, in the romantic loveliness of Miss Julia Marlowe, the intellectual force and striking originality of Mrs. Fiske, the gentle beauty and profound devotion of Miss Viola Allen, the abundant passion and exquisite vocalism of Mrs. Carter, and the wild, dashing, picturesque abandonment of Miss Blanche Bates; but no woman in the theatre of this period shows the inspirational fire, the opulent intellect, the dominant character and the abounding genius,—rising to great heights and satisfying the utmost demand of great occasions,—that were victorious and imperial in Charlotte Cushman.

VI.

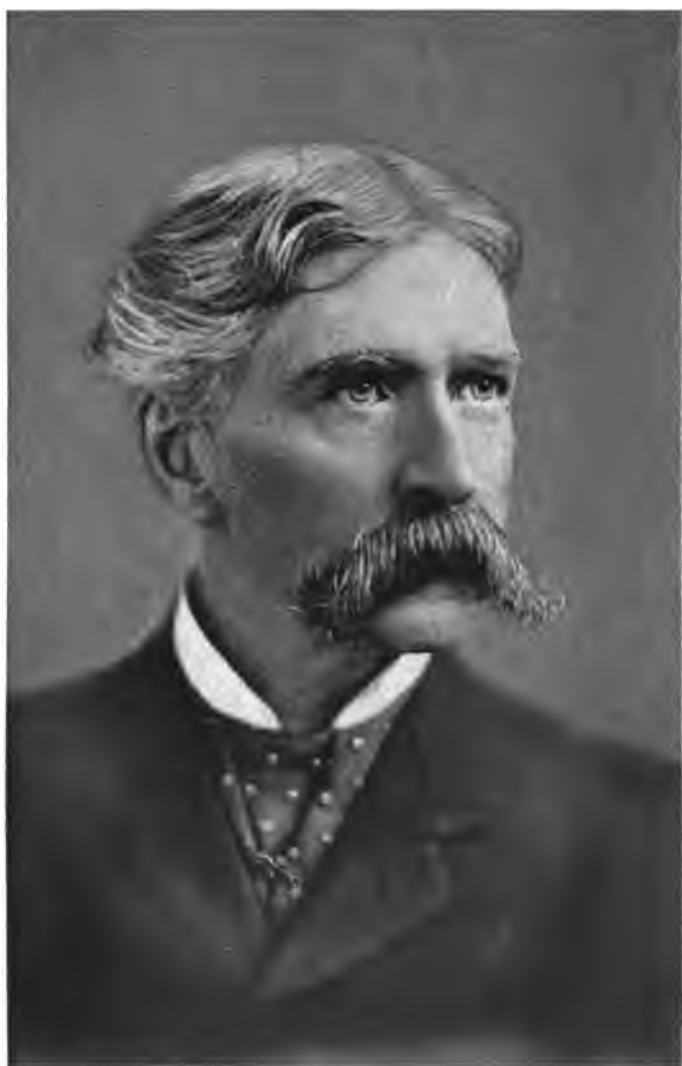
EDWARD A. SOTHERN.

THE birthday of Edward A. Sothern was the first of April, and his middle name was Askew. Those facts he mentioned to me, in a frolic spirit and with a quizzical smile, as indicative of his obvious predilection to whimsicality. He was the most whimsical of actors; but beneath his whimsicality there was a fine intelligence. He possessed a keen perception of character, a quick sense of humour, and a potent faculty of imitation, combined with ample knowledge of human nature and of the social world. His natural qualifications for the vocation of acting were of exceptional and decisive authenticity: a fine figure; a symmetrical head, which, somewhat early in his life, was crowned with gleaming silvery hair; a handsome face—the features regular, the complexion fair and fresh; the eyes large and of a positive, brilliant, grayish blue; a distinguished

manner; a loud, clear, expressive voice; an alert mind, and much sensibility of temperament. He was an attentive observer of manners and a careful student of dramatic art, and he had developed his powers, and become expert and proficient, through a long ordeal of professional experience. He made the character of *Lord Dundreary*, and with that character, a fabric of humorous eccentricity, he acquired fame and fortune. Superficial observers might have supposed that he was a mere farcical buffoon. The eye of experience discerned that he was far from being a trifler. It was not folly that prompted Sothern to play the fool. Viola, in "Twelfth Night," takes note of the wisdom that is required "to play the fool well." In "As You Like It" the banished *Duke* says of *Touchstone*: "He wears his folly like a stalking horse, and under the presentation of that he shoots his wit." That was Sothern's way. He knew what he wanted to do, and he knew how to do it. He drew from life. He displayed human nature through the medium of ludicrous fancy. He once assured me that there was not a trait in the character of *Lord Dundreary*, nor a

movement made by him, that he had not seen in some actual individual. Like that *Yorick* of fiction, Laurence Sterne, whom, mentally, he resembled, he veiled satire with fantastic humour. He was the *Yorick* of the stage; a comedian of inventive skill, original character, quaint quality and intrinsic force.

Sothorn was born at Liverpool, England, in 1826. His father, an owner of ships and collieries, was prosperous and wealthy. The family comprised nine children, of whom Edward was the seventh. He was carefully educated, under the direction of a private tutor. No one of his ancestors was ever on the stage. His parents died before he adopted the dramatic profession. Writing to me, in 1876, he stated that his choice of that vocation "was purely an accident." He had, however, known some adversity of fortune. "I was studying medicine" (so he wrote to me), "and used to act with amateurs, who paid for playing, at the King's Cross Theatre, London, thirty-two years ago. The first salary I received was fifteen English shillings a week. It was at a little theatre in Guernsey. My opening



EDWARD ASKEW SOTHERN
1826-1881

parts were the *Ghost*, in 'Hamlet,' *Laertes* (cutting out his first scene) and the *Second Actor*. I had a memorandum pinned on the wing to tell me when to change my costumes. Some wag moved it, and I got the three characters mixed up! You can conceive how wildly absurd the result was. I was dismissed for incapacity."

From Guernsey he went to Plymouth, and later to Weymouth, Wolverhampton, and Birmingham. With the latter place he formed associations that he always cherished, and in after life he returned to that genial, hospitable city as to the abode of valued friends. In 1852 he came to America. He had adopted the romantic stage-name of Douglas Stuart, and under that name he appeared at the National Theatre, Haymarket Square, Boston, acting *Doctor Pangloss*, in "The Heir-at-Law." His performance was a failure; he had the sense to recognize it as such; and, in order to obtain experience by acting all sorts of parts, he obtained an engagement at Barnum's Museum, New York, where performances were given twice or thrice a day, and where he toiled for a year. He was then engaged by E. A. Mar-

shall, of the old Broadway Theatre, to play light comedy parts, at Washington. There he acted for a few months, and then he joined Laura Keene's company, at the Charles Street Theatre, Baltimore. In 1854 he became a member of Wallack's New York company, with which he remained associated during four years, acting serious "walking gentlemen," heavy parts and broad low-comedy. In 1856 he discarded his stage name of Stuart and used his own, appearing December 22, in association with Matilda Heron, as the infatuated lover of the courtesan, in the diseased, sophistical, pernicious play of Camille (*La Dame aux Camélias*). Miss Heron, then in the prime of her beauty and vigor, made the afflicted heroine sufficiently effective to inspire a cohort of imitators, who have been loving, coughing, and expiring ever since. Sothorn was earnest—but out of place. Many years afterward he said to Edwin Booth:

"The worst performance ever seen was my *Armand Duval*."

Whereupon Booth gravely rejoined:

"The *worst*? Did you ever see my *Romeo*?"

From Wallack's Sothern went to Laura Keene's Theatre, and there, presently, by a fortunate accident, he found a serviceable dramatic vehicle and achieved a decisive victory. The play, by Tom Taylor, called "Our American Cousin," was brought out on October 18, 1858. In a letter addressed to me Sothern wrote:

"Laura Keene asked me to try and do something with a fourth-class, dyed-up old man—about seventeen lines long. I said yes, if I might revise the part, and try an idea that had been in my head for years and years. You know the result."

The result was that, there and then, he laid the foundation of his subsequent fortune and renown. Jefferson had the principal character, *Asa Trenchard*, and it was the acting of Jefferson that carried the play to success; but, long after Jefferson had discarded "Our American Cousin," Sothern continued to perform in it, building the character of *Lord Dundreary* and making it drolly and artistically illustrative of his wide knowledge of the foibles and eccentricities of human nature. He played many parts:

among them were *Charles Surface*, in "The School for Scandal"; *Charles Marlow*, in "She Stoops to Conquer"; *Benedick*, in "Much Ado About Nothing"; *Raphael*, in "The Marble Heart"; *Claude Melnotte*, in "The Lady of Lyons"; *St. Pierre*, in "The Wife"; *Frank Annerly*, in "The Favorite of Fortune"; *Colonel White*, in "Home"; *Charles Chuckles*, in "An English Gentleman"; *Fitzaltamount*, in "The Crushed Tragedian"; and *David Garrick*, in the comedy of that name; but his indelible mark was made as *Lord Dundreary*, and that personation implicated the chief peculiarities of his style. The last twenty years of his life were divided between England and America. He died, in London, in 1881, and was buried in the great cemetery of Southampton, not far from the central gate.

Lester Wallack (1820-1888), the representative light comedian of his time, was accustomed earnestly to insist that a really good actor is one who is not obliged to restrict himself to a single line of business, but is capable of playing parts of all kinds. That is true; but experience has

conclusively shown that, however good an actor may be, he shows to the best advantage in those characters, always few, with which his temperament is closely congenial, and through the medium of which his essential individuality and native expertness of simulation can most freely be expressed. Stage history abounds with examples. Betterton, as may be seen in the pages of Cibber, was identified with *Hamlet*. Cumberland the veteran dramatist, told Rogers, the poet, that the best impersonations he ever saw were Garrick's *Lear*, Henderson's *Falstaff* and Cooke's *Iago*. Fladgate, the father of the Garrick Club, who remembered John Philip Kemble and Edmund Kean in their best days, declared to me, in response to a direct inquiry as to this point, that Kemble's masterpiece was *Penruddock*, in "The Wheel of Fortune," and that Kean's supreme achievement was *Sir Edward Mortimer*, in "The Iron Chest." The memory of John Bannister is twined immortally with *Walter*, in "The Children in the Wood." The illustrious name of Sarah Siddons is inseparably associated with *Lady Macbeth*, *Jane Shore*, *Mrs. Beverley* and

Mrs. Haller. Macready reached his zenith in *Macbeth*. Forrest was superb in *Othello*, *Spartacus* and *Jack Cade*. Edwin Booth's genius flowered in *Richelieu*. William Warren, delightful in many parts, was incomparable as *Touchstone*. Jefferson, who acted more than one hundred parts, was perfection in *Rip Van Winkle* and *Acres*. Henry Irving,—to me the greatest actor of my time, because he evinced a deeper knowledge of human nature, a broader comprehension and firmer grasp of the ideal, a wider scope of interpretative action, and an ampler facility of dramatic expression than any other actor has done whom I have seen,—was superb and unapproachable as *Mathias*, in "The Bells"; *Doctor Primrose*, the Vicar of Wakefield, in "Olivia"; *Shylock*, in "The Merchant of Venice"; *Charles the First*, in the pathetic drama of that name; *Becket*, the great Archbishop; and *Mephistopheles*, in "Faust."

Sothorn's temperament and intellect,—the one mercurial, the other quizzical; the one veiling sensibility with glee, the other prone to whimsical speculation and blandly satirical commentary on

character and life—made for themselves, in *Lord Dundreary*, a thoroughly congenial medium of spontaneous utterance. Sothern's embodiment of that character showed no effort. Its vesture of vacuity was irresistibly comical, while, within that vesture, its shrewd, waggish mind, continuously operative, was intensely interesting. Its attributes were bland, nonsensical self-assurance; portentous gravity; tortuous mental tangle; unexpectedness of speech and motion; inconsequence of reasoning; abundant vitality; brilliant vigor of expression; pervasive refinement; and a charming vein of alert playfulness. The prodigious sapience of *Lord Dundreary's* disjointed colloquies with his sweetheart and with his servant rose to the height of comic humour. The manner in which the man's mind stumbled and fell over itself cannot be described. No one but Sothern could do it, or has ever done it since. The performance has passed into history, and, by those observers who take a large view of the acted drama, using it as a valuable aid in their study of mankind and of social progress, it is noted and treasured. As a work of dramatic art, viewed

with reference to its elaborate, complex mosaic of detail, it ranks with the most felicitous and memorable of recorded specialties; with such representative personations, for example, as those of *Paul Pry*, by Burton; *Lord Ogleby*, by John Gilbert; *Jemmy Twitcher*, by John Sefton; *Doctor Caius*, by Henry Placide; *Mortland*, by Lester Wallack; *Sir William Fondlove*, by Mark Smith; *Lord Duberley*, by William Rufus Blake; *Major Wellington de Boots*, by John Sleeper Clarke; *Joshua Butterby*, by John E. Owens; *Benjamin Goldfinch*, by John Hare; and *Dick Phenyl*, by Edward Terry.

One of the names that I love to remember is that of Edwin Adams, long since dead and gone, and distant from us by about the period of a generation. Sothern and I were closely associated in organizing and conducting performances for his benefit, which were given in October, 1877, when he had been overtaken by misfortune and was slowly dying. Those performances resulted in obtaining about ten thousand dollars. Sothern acted for the benefit, in New York, Philadelphia, and Boston.

One personal incident of that time, ludicrous as well as serious, deserves to be recorded. When the performances had been given and the excitement was over, Sothern and I determined to go to Philadelphia and call on Adams, who was lying, desperately ill, at 114 South Twelfth Street, the residence of a relative, Mr. D. K. Gardiner. Sothern was then acting, every night, at the Park Theatre, New York, in "The Crushed Tragedian," and was dwelling at the Gramercy Park Hotel. I met him at the hotel early in the morning, and we set forth on our journey,—beguiling the time with pleasant talk about many things; for he was eagerly interested in the affairs of the hour, and always a blithe companion. After a time, which seemed very short, our train rolled into a station and stopped, and many passengers left the car, while a few others entered it. This we did not heed. I noticed, casually, that we were almost alone. Sothern remained quiescent, and so did I. In a little while our train moved again, and presently the conductor approached and asked for our

tickets,—which had already been delivered to him. Sothern said:

“We are going to Philadelphia.”

“No,” said the conductor; “you are going away from it.”

We had left Philadelphia far behind us; we were aboard a train that would make no stop for three hours; and the distance between the comedian and his theatre in New York was rapidly increasing. Other passengers soon became aware of our dilemma. An influential railway officer was discovered, in another car. Persuasion was brought to bear on the somewhat obdurate but conscientious conductor, and, by and by, the speed of the train was sufficiently slackened to admit of our leaving it by jumping off.

We landed near a little station, the name of which I have forgotten. As we stood beside the track, gazing ruefully on the rural scenery and on each other, Sothern said:

“Have you any *cards* about you?”

“Yes,” I answered.

He wanted a visiting-card, on which to write a memorandum.

That colloquy was overheard by a rustic bystander, who, as we subsequently learned, went immediately to the neighboring hotel and reported that "two gamblers" had been ejected from the express train. In that hotel, vigilantly watched, as persons of a dangerous class, we took luncheon; and presently, having by chance ascertained that we were near to the farm of Charles Fechter, the eminent actor, I assured Sothern that I had brought him there expressly to see Fechter's retreat, and to view a celebrated picture, much admired by Fechter (it was, in fact, a dreadful daub), then hanging on the wall of the dining-room. To that pleasantry, of course, Sothern subscribed, and our conversation was heard with interest by the watchers of our proceedings,—to them mysterious and suspicious. There we were obliged to remain, for about two hours, practically under guard, waiting for a train on which to return. It came at last, and, having been duly followed to the station, we were glad to escape.

Sothern proceeded directly to New York, arriving just in time to reach the Park Theatre

and give his performance. It fell to me to stop at Philadelphia, and, alone, to take leave of Adams, our much-loved comrade. He was on his death-bed—pale, emaciated, feeble, but firm in mind, and, as ever, cheerful and sweet in spirit. He could speak only in a whisper. He gave to me cordial messages of kindness to Sothern and to many other friends. “We haven’t had a drink together, Willy,” he said, “for some time; but we’ll have one now.” Some champagne was brought. He sipped a little of it by means of a glass tube, and, as he did so, his kind eyes looked up at me, with the same merry old twinkle that I had seen in them in his days of health and joy: and so we said Good-by. Late that night I rejoined Sothern in New York and told him of that parting scene. About ten days later, October 28, 1877, at 11:15 A. M., Edwin Adams died,—passing away in the forty-fourth year of his age.

Everybody loved Adams. Sothern was devotedly attached to him. I suppose he is seldom, if ever, remembered now. In his day he was one of the blithest spirits in all the bright world of

the stage. Adams was a native of Boston, born February 8, 1834. He adopted the dramatic profession in 1853, and he had a career of about twenty-three years, winning signal reputation as *Rover*, in "Wild Oats"; *Robert Landry*, in "The Dead Heart"; and *Enoch Arden*, in a drama based on Tennyson's pathetic narrative poem, of that name. A vase of dark blue granite marks his grave, at Laurel Hill, on which the inscription, chosen by his dear friend, John McCullough, truthfully declares, in the beautiful words of Shakespeare, that

His life was gentle, and the elements
So mix'd in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world "This was a man."

Sothorn told me an anecdote of himself which I recall as especially indicative of his temperament and his tact. He said that once, when he was a member of Laura Keene's company, Miss Keene, whose temper was tempestuous and violent, took offence and became exceedingly angry with him. It was evening and she had summoned him to come to her room, intending to vent her rage in a tirade of censure.

"I knew her way" (so Sothern proceeded),
"and I did not wait for her to speak.

" 'Before you utter a word, Miss Keene,' I said, 'let me turn down the gas-light.'

"I turned it down as I spoke.

" 'What is that for?' she cried—amazed as well as enraged.

" 'Because,' I answered, 'I can bear to endure whatever you have to say; but I *cannot* bear to see those beautiful eyes blazing with passion, and that lovely face distorted with wrath. Go on, now, and say whatever you please.'

"She was immediately mollified and we were friends again."

Sothern greatly admired the acting of the illustrious French actress, Rachel, and he often talked of her statuesque beauty, inspirational fire, and perfectly expressive art. One of her effective expedients he particularly noted, and sometimes used. She had a way of keeping her eyes partly closed, for a while, and then, suddenly, at the climax of a speech, letting them flash wide open, so that they blazed with light and meaning. All such aids to theatrical effect were carefully

considered by him and judiciously employed; for his acting, while delightfully fluent and seemingly spontaneous, was, in fact, compounded of many acute and felicitous devices, harmoniously blended in a uniform and beautiful artistic method. The early ambition of Sothern was to shine in serious drama, and I think he never quite discarded the conviction that he might have excelled in tragedy.

Sothern, at one time, investigated "spiritualism," and, subsequently, he sometimes amused himself with it, pretending to be a "medium" and, as such, privately, and as a pastime, performing "feats" customarily performed by practitioners of that class. He told me that, in order to amaze and overwhelm a skeptical acquaintance, he ascertained, by indirect means, the number inscribed on that person's watch, and, a year afterward, contrived to include him in a group of inquirers, assembled for "a spiritual seance," and, becoming "entranced," imparted "a spiritual communication," stating that a certain watch was in the room, and naming its number. Sothern added the remark that the owner of that watch

became a believer in "spiritualism." Sothern's actual view of that subject was expressed in a letter that he wrote, in 1865, of which this is an explicit passage:

"I look upon every spiritualist as either an impostor or an idiot. I regard every spiritual exhibitor, who makes money by his exhibitions, as a swindler. The things that these people do are *not* done by spiritual or supernatural means. I know that; I have proved it. I have done all that they can do, and more. The history of 'spiritualism' . . . is, on the one hand, a chronicle of imbecility, cowardly terror of the supernatural, wilful self-delusion and irreligion; and, on the other, of fraud and impudent chicanery and blasphemous indecency. I do not say that there are not 'more things in Heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy'; but I *do* say that, as a result of such a practical investigation of 'spiritualism' as I believe few other men have made, I must honestly and fearlessly denounce it as a mockery, a delusion, a snare, and a swindle."

The remark of the cockney theatrical manager, made to the dramatist, Henry J. Byron, at Plym-

outh, England, "Hi've 'ad a fine walk, this morning, all around the O" (meaning the Hoe), elicited from Byron the playful rejoinder, "It would do you good now to take another, and go around the H." Sothern's sportive fashion was of the nimble, pleasant order thus exemplified. Wherever he came the spirit of frolic came with him. In a party at supper one night, Robert Heller, the magician, being present, Sothern suddenly pretended to be very ill, with severe pain in the chest. Heller, with perfect gravity and an expression of deep solicitude, rose and approached him; and, after feeling his pulse and noting the action of his heart, said:

"I should think you *would* feel ill"—and suddenly took a large dinner-plate out of his mouth.

"Thank you," said the actor; "I'm better now."

Once, with several companions, he came into a chophouse where I happened to be sitting, at luncheon, and eagerly, with an intensely serious aspect, seized a jar that was on the table, and, with both hands, turned it from right to left, and then from left to right.

"Now," he said, "try it—and you'll see that it

is perceptibly heavier, when turned from the left to the right, than it is when turned from the right to the left."

Each of his companions tried it, and, completely deceived by his marvellously earnest demeanor of conviction, two of them declared that it was so!

He possessed the same faculty for which Artemus Ward was so remarkable—that of "keeping a straight face." Many of his practical jokes have been described in print. Some of them, I have heard, carried the fun to a painful extreme. Others were innocent.

The serious side of Sothern's nature revealed itself only to his intimate friends; and those were few. He kept a record-book in which he entered the names of scores of persons whom he had met, in the different cities that he visited, in various countries; and against each name he set certain marks indicative of his estimate and valuation of the persons designated. His knowledge of character was deep, accurate, and comprehensive. He generally seemed to be gay and even frivolous; but, beneath the surface, he was thoughtful, often

sad, always observant. He closely studied, without seeming to do so, every person, man or woman, with whom he came in contact, and he perceived every peculiarity and saw clearly through every disguise. He could go upon his lawn and turn the crank of a hand-organ to amuse a company of vapid English "swells" (Jefferson told me that he saw Sothern doing that, at his home in England), but he knew precisely how vapid the "swells" were, and precisely the way in which to utilize them. In some respects he was a cynic, and he could confront selfishness with a bland, glittering, sarcastic, yet seemingly innocent and genial playfulness, that appeared positively cruel. He was aware of the evil and the contemptible propensities that are in human nature, and of the weakness and folly that are the frequent blemishes of human conduct, and likewise he was bitterly conscious of his own defects and errors. His secret mood was that of self-reproach, and at heart he was unhappy. His outward aspect, however, remained continually cheerful. Whatever might happen, his smile was sunshine, mirth attended him, and

the roses of pleasure bloomed along his path. He sought distraction; he lived in excitement; he laughed, and he made others laugh; but, intrinsically, he was a man of sombre mind, sensitive conscience, acute sensibility, and affectionate heart; and for unselfishness and integrity his respect had no bounds. In the course of a long life I have been favored with moral admonition from several sources,—having never followed conventions, nor deferred to public opinion, nor sought worldly advantage, nor valued property and fame before justice and honor, and therefore having been the proper object of exhortation; but the most earnest moral counsel ever addressed to me fell from the lips of Sothern, and that in times of gayest festival. It takes a conscious sinner to impart good advice, and it was not for nothing that the wise old Egyptians had the skeleton at the feast.

Among my theatrical relics there is a letter from Edwin Booth, who was acting in London in 1881, containing this reference to Sothern, with reflections characteristic of the writer:

“After I had finished *Othello*, last evening,

January 21, I was told of poor Sothern's death. I had passed an hour with him on Monday, and I really thought he might die while I was at his bedside—he was so emaciated and weak. They had taken him to Bournemouth, at the doctor's suggestion; but he suffered so much there that he was hurried back to London. The journey there and back was enough to overwhelm a man in his condition.

“What a full company of players has made its exit this twelvemonth past! And how strange it is that so many utterly worthless men are permitted to remain, while the good ones are taken away! And how sad it seems that when the good fellow—who has had such a host of friends—goes to his grave (very often, of late, at all events, it has happened), he should be so poorly attended. Think of Brougham and of Floyd. I don't know what is to be done in Sothern's case. I've heard nothing; and, on account of a very severe cold, which I fear to aggravate while I am acting, I shall not be able to take

part in the funeral, beyond visiting the house of mourning. I doubt very much if there'll be many, of all the hundreds that flocked around him in life, that will follow his corse, or think of him after to-day."

Sothorn's sons, Lytton (since deceased) and Edward H., now a prosperous actor, were present at the burial of their father, as also were his old friends, Robert Wyndham, of Edinburgh, Sir John Rae Reid, Captain Fred Rasch, and Horace Wall. No one of those old friends, I believe, is now living. Horace Wall, for many years a theatrical agent and manager, at various times associated with Sothorn, Edwin Adams, Dion Boucicault, John E. Owens, W. J. Florence, John S. Clarke, and Mrs. John Wood, committed suicide, in New York, March 22, 1899. I first visited the grave of Sothorn on August 6, 1891. A simple cross of white marble marks the place, and over it an oak casts its shadow, and roses bloom there, and all is peace.

Sothorn has, by some people, been deemed, and called, heartless. I did not find him so. After his death his sister apprized me that he carried

my latest letter to him in his breast pocket till the day when he took off his clothes for the last time, and that he kept a volume of my poems, that I had given to him, on the table at his bedside till the last moment of his life. As I think of him, and of the sorrows that he brought upon himself, and of the griefs that he veiled, and of the anguish that he patiently suffered, in his last, long, afflicting illness, I recall the pathetic lines of Byron,—never more appropriate than when applied to the experience of that *Yorick* of the stage:

Though wit may flash from fluent lips and mirth distract
the breast,
Through midnight hours that yield no more their former
hope of rest,
'Tis but as ivy leaves around the ruined turret wreath,
All green and wildly fresh without but worn and gray beneath.

VII.

JOHN McCULLOUGH.

It was my privilege to see and study the acting of John McCullough in all the important parts that he played; to observe and record his progress; to advise him (at his request) in the practice of his profession; to win and hold his affectionate friendship; to stand beside him in the misery that darkened round his melancholy closing days; to bear his pall; and to write his elegy. I knew him for many years. I saw him under many and various circumstances. I remember him as a man of essentially noble nature; and, in reviewing his career, I perceive him as a remarkable example of potential character, lofty ambition, gentle patience, integrity of purpose and beneficent achievement. He was a tragic actor of fine natural talents, thoughtfully, carefully and thoroughly cultivated. He was a man of liberal mind, tender heart, sensitive temperament,



JOHN McCULLOUGH

generous disposition, natural dignity and simple manners. His service to the stage, and therefore to society, consisted in the steadfast maintenance of the highest standard of art. He exemplified, in acting, the attribute of puissance,—an attribute of which, in the American theatre, Edwin Forrest had been the leading representative; but he exalted and beautified that attribute by adding to it an intellectual refinement and grace such as Forrest never displayed. He was on the stage for twenty-seven years. His customary repertory included thirty characters. His artistic success was extraordinary. Poor, unknown, and without social advantages, he rose, by intrinsic merit, to splendid renown. His personal success was the acquisition of that love which is more than fame. No one of our actors was ever more affectionately prized by the members of the dramatic profession. With the humblest as with the highest, to think of John McCullough was to think of the comrade and the friend, and the public thought of him was genial with a kindred feeling. He did not possess an electrical, fiery genius, like that of Edwin Booth. “I will always gladly be sec-

ond to Edwin," he once said to me, with the fervor of heart-felt admiration. He did not, as Jefferson did, carry the talisman of serio-comic humour. But he possessed elemental dramatic power and rare personal charm. He met the world upon the broad and general field of human sympathy: he shone with a benignant lustre: he suggested Shakespeare's "great sea-mark, standing every flaw": he was magnanimity incarnate: he was the embodiment of manly tenderness: he was the vital, sympathetic symbol of sincerity, goodness, and truth: and as such he conquered.

In the days of my youth there was a theatre in Howard Street, Boston, called the Howard Athenæum. One season it was leased and managed by Jacob Barrow, a round, fat, peppery, explosive little Englishman, the husband of Julia Bennett Barrow, a fine, dashing actress and a general favorite, proficient in such piquant old comedy characters as are typified by *Letitia Hardy* and *Lady Teazle*, and such woful heroines of old drama as *Mrs. Haller* and *Jane Shore*. Jacob Barrow was one of those happily constituted persons who possess the convenient

art of living on nothing a year: his thoughts were chiefly concentrated on the engrossing subject of dinner: he was a connoisseur of food and drink: but he had wedded an actress of brilliant ability, and he had the sense to know that an accomplished player never appears to such good advantage as when surrounded with professional associates of kindred ability. He liked to see Mrs. Barrow thus surrounded, and he brought to the Howard Athenæum Henry Wallack, George Jordan, John E. Owens, John Brougham, Charlotte Thompson, Mary Carr, and other performers of repute; and he presented in a delightful manner a series of time-honored plays. In that theatre I first saw Henry Wallack act *Squire Broadlands*,—a delicious interpretation of the Sir Roger de Coverley ideal,—and heard him sing the touching song of “The Fine Old English Gentleman.” In that theatre I first saw John Brougham as *Dazzle* and as *Captain Murphy Maguire*, with Mrs. Barrow as the bewitching *Widow Delmaine*,—a veritable vision of tantalizing beauty. There I first made acquaintance with the galliard grace of handsome George Jor-

dan, a prince of romantic stage heroes and precursor of our modern theatrical beaux. There I first enjoyed—and great enjoyment it was!—the rich and rosy humor of John E. Owens, in “Paul Pry” and “The Happiest Day of My Life.” And there I first saw John McCullough, nearly fifty years ~~years~~ ago.

E. L. Davenport was the manager of the Howard then,—an actor of rare and versatile ability, esteemed, in his day, the most correct performer of *Hamlet*, and accomplished in such a wide range of parts that he could pass from *Brutus* to *St. Marc*; from *Sir Giles Overreach* to *Aranza*; and from *Damon* to *Macbeth*. McCullough was playing comparatively small parts at the Howard, but he had been studious and faithful in all that he undertook, and therefore he was prepared for his opportunity when it came. Davenport had produced “The Dead Heart,” one of Charles Selby’s numerous plays, and was acting *Robert Landry*, one of the longest parts in the whole range of the romantic drama. Lawrence Barrett,—admirable, but not yet famous,—was in the company, and was acting the *Abbé*. There came

a day when Davenport was so ill with rheumatism that he could not leave his bed; and, accordingly, at about eleven o'clock in the morning an order reached the theatre that McCullough should go on at night and *read* the part of *Landry*,—the audience having first been apprized of Davenport's sudden illness and consequent incapacity to appear. McCullough took the manuscript and went to his lodging, a bedroom in a boarding-house not far from the theatre. "I sat on my bed"—so he told me in after years—"and looked at the written pages; and suddenly I determined to learn the words and to *act* the part that night without the book."

That resolve was accomplished. The young actor remained sitting on his bed, studying those words, till darkness fell upon him, and by that time he had completely absorbed every syllable that *Landry* has to speak, and every piece of "business." Then he went to the theatre, put on the dress, and awaited the call. "I had not told anybody," he said to me, "what I intended to do. I walked on, when the cue came, and I played the part, from beginning to end, and was letter-

perfect in it. The astonishment of the company was great, and the vexation of Lawrence Barrett was such that he could not conceal it." As leading man of Davenport's company, Barrett naturally considered that the part of *Landry*, if it were to be *acted* and not merely *read*, should have been allotted to him; but his feeling of annoyance soon passed away. The success of McCullough in that emergency (his assiduous and quick study, his feat of memory, and his potential fulfilment of a bold design), was promptly made known in the newspapers, and from that hour his advancement was assured. His physical condition at the time, however, was dangerous. For several successive days and nights he could not sleep; and, as he related to me, with many expressions of gratitude and affectionate remembrance, it was then that the comedian, William Warren, one of the kindest and best of men, took charge of him, and by soothing companionship and a judicious use of restoratives at length composed his nervous system, and enabled him to proceed in his journal course. The *Robert Landry* feat came to the knowledge of Edwin Forrest, then

the leader of our stage, who was so much pleased that he soon sent for McCullough and engaged him; and after that his professional path was clear.

Some young men are able to plan their lives, at least to a certain extent, and to choose a vocation: others find themselves to be wholly the creatures of circumstance, and are drifted into positions that they never dreamed of seeking. No ancestral bias impelled John McCullough to the stage. His choice of it was accidental. His parents were poor and their condition was obscure and humble. He was born at a village called Blakes, near to Coleraine, in the North of Ireland, November 14, 1832. Nearly half a century later (1880) he visited that place, and, in telling me of that visit, he dwelt playfully upon its primitive character. "I was shown," he said, "to a chamber, on the ground-floor of a sort of ecclesiastical ruin, and when I awoke in the morning I saw a cow that had thrust her head through an open, arched window, and appeared to be trying to eat my trousers."

At Blakes, in his boyhood, he passed fifteen

years. He was a farmer's boy, and, as such, he worked in the fields. He was taught to read, but in other respects he received no education. When he came to America, in 1847, he could not even write his name, and with literature and art he was completely unacquainted. He went to Philadelphia, because his cousin was living there, and with that relative, whom he discovered by chance, he found employment as a chair-maker. Association with a "stage-struck" workman directed his attention to playbooks and made him a reader of Shakespeare. He presently joined a dramatic club and contrived to obtain a little training in elocution. His industry and zeal attracted friendly interest. Books were placed at his disposal, and he read them with avidity. One of his early friends, William F. Johnson, of Philadelphia, has told me that the boy read most of Chambers' Encyclopædia of English Literature in one month, and having an exceedingly retentive memory carried the substance of it in his mind, and that he was never weary of talking about British authors and their works. The sight of a performance of Shiel's tragedy of "The

"Apostate" fired him with emulative desire to act, and in 1857, after an humble novitiate as a super, he obtained an engagement at the Arch Street Theatre,—then managed by William Wheatley and the elder John Drew,—and he appeared there, as *Thomas*, in "The Belle's Stratagem," thus beginning his theatrical career. There he remained for three years, playing minor parts. The first leading part that he acted was that of *Astralagus, King of the Alps*, in a play by the once eminent actor, J. B. Buckstone, presented at the Arch Street Theatre, June 28, 1858. His name appears in the playbill of that night with "J" prefixed,—the first time it was so printed. Later came the episode of his engagement at the Howard Athenæum; the *Landry* incident; and a fortunate alliance with the professional forces of Edwin Forrest,—a man whom he admired and loved (though aware of his radical defects, and prone to sport, not unkindly, with his ludicrous foibles), and an actor whom, at first, he imitated, and upon whom his style was based.

McCullough joined Forrest in the autumn of 1861, appearing with him, in Boston, as *Pythias*;

and thereafter, for five years, he continued to act with that muscular chieftain,—in such parts as *Macduff*, *Richmond*, *Iago*, *Edgar*, *Laertes*, *Titus*, *Icilius* and *Cominius*,—traversing the country and performing in many cities. In 1866 they acted in San Francisco, and McCullough was invited to remain there and form a partnership with the noble actor Lawrence Barrett, for the management of the California Theatre. Forrest advised him to accept the proposal.

“Stay here,” said the old actor. “Leave off imitating me. Blank!—Blank!—Blank! A lot of infernal fools are doing that, all over the country. Build yourself up here, and you will do well.” The plan was fulfilled. The California Theatre had a splendid career and became one of the leading dramatic institutions of the State. The partnership of McCullough and Barrett lasted till 1870, when Barrett withdrew from it. McCullough remained in management for five years more, but, in 1875, the financial failure of his friend Ralston, the banker, compelled his retirement. He had already, 1874, begun to travel as a star, and the next ten years were passed in

the fulfilment of star engagements. In 1881 he acted at Drury Lane Theatre, London, presenting *Virginius* and *Othello*, and winning much favor and many friends. In 1883 his health began to decline, but he continued to act until the autumn of the following year, when, at McVicker's Theatre, Chicago, September 29, 1884, he finally collapsed, and left the stage. His disease was softening of the brain. The closing scenes of his life were inexpressibly mournful. In the summer of 1885 he was placed in a private asylum at Bloomingdale, New York, where he remained for several months. In the autumn of that year he was removed to Philadelphia. His death occurred on November 8, 1885. There was a public funeral on November 12, and the actor's remains were laid in Mount Moriah Cemetery. His grave is marked by a stately monument and a portrait bust, placed there in 1888, at the unveiling of which I delivered an elegy, apostrophizing the beloved and lamented actor and closing with this stanza:

While summer days are long and lonely,
While autumn sunshine seems to weep,

While midnight hours are bleak, and only
The stars and clouds their vigils keep,
All gentle things that live shall moan thee,
All fond regrets forever wake;
For earth is happier having known thee,
And Heaven is sweeter for thy sake!

The comedian, in private life, is usually a sad person. There are, of course, exceptions, but the rule is positive. One of the most melancholy men I have ever known,—in his lonely hours,—was the comedian, John T. Raymond, so pleasantly remembered as the humorous, eccentric representative of *Colonel Sellers* and of *Ichabod Crane*; yet, in society, he seemed the personification of spontaneous mirth. William E. Burton and John E. Owens, intrinsically the most humorous of all our comedians, were, in private life, serious, thoughtful, and often sad. William Warren, irresistibly funny on the stage, was, privately, almost a recluse,—dreading death, and often brooding upon that dread. The tragedian, on the contrary, is commonly found to be exceptionally blithe. Even Edwin Booth, despite his *Hamlet* temperament, was, in social hours with an intimate friend, the soul of mirth, abounding with

comic stories and keenly appreciative of everything comical. When George L. Fox acted *Hamlet*, giving a burlesque of Booth's performance of that part,—coming on the scene in a fur coat and snowshoes, to meet the ghost,—no auditor could have enjoyed the travesty more than Booth did. Jefferson used to relate that he read to Booth the Crummles episode, in the novel of "Nicholas Nickleby," a book with which the tragedian had not then made acquaintance, and that Booth was convulsed with merriment to such a degree that he nearly died of laughter. John McCullough was especially happy in a buoyant temperament and a quick sense of mirth.) Narrative of the merry pranks that were played by McCullough, Edwin Adams, William J. Florence, James Collier and others of their brilliant circle,—all dead and gone now,—would fill many pages. With McCullough and Adams the sombre Edwin Forrest was ever a shining mark for playful mischief. Adams was continually contriving ridiculous situations in which the gravity of Forrest became irresistibly comical. McCullough was ever ready to promote the frolic; and, as For-

rest's perception of humour was not lively, the droll devices of those wags were generally successful.

McCullough liked to relate the incidents of a voyage that he made, in company with Forrest, on the Pacific Ocean,—sailing from San Francisco to another port on the Pacific coast of America. The veteran was ill at sea, except in still weather, when he would a little revive, while McCullough was a good sailor and never seasick. Forrest sat on deck, with a colored silk handkerchief tied round his head; pale, ghastly, suffering continual qualms, and looking with a baleful gaze of resentment on his robust and tranquil companion. The language of Forrest, at most times (like that of the pious Macready, and also like that of the benign Couldock), was profusely variegated with profane expletives: on that occasion his profanity became prodigal.

“Blank-blank-blank!” he suddenly ejaculated: “you great hulking brute! You haven’t got *brains* enough to be sick!”

By and by the sea grew calm, and the invalid found himself in better condition. It was a Sun-

day morning, and the usual preparations had been made for public worship.

"There will be divine service in the saloon, at eleven o'clock, sir," said McCullough, "and I have asked the purser to reserve a seat for you, near to the desk. I thought that, perhaps, you would like to attend."

"You've done well," answered Forrest. "Blank-blank-blank! I'd give fifty dollars to hear a good sermon. What sort of a man will preach? Is he a good preacher?"

McCullough had seen the clergyman who was to officiate, and had found him to be a long, lank, red-haired vision of elderly misery, depressing to behold, and provided with a rasping, nasal voice, intolerable to sensitive ears.

"The minister is a handsome young man," he replied, "and they tell me he is a fine reader and very eloquent. I think that you will be *surprised*."

"Well, by Blank-blank! let's go in."

"I took special care," said McCullough to me, in telling the story, "to place him well in front, where, of course, he was a conspicuous figure; and

I knew that he could not escape: and when the parson got under way the look that he gave me was a rich reward. He made the best of his dilemma, and submitted to the infliction."

Soon after the service had ended and Forrest had retired to his cabin, the wind came on to blow, the sea grew rough, and he was again taken ill. McCullough went to the clergyman and, complimenting him on his "excellent discourse," assured him that the great actor had been especially pleased and impressed by it, and was wishful to see him. The delighted preacher promptly obeyed the "summons" and repaired to Forrest's room. The language that ensued can, perhaps, be surmised: it certainly cannot be fully written.

"Blank-blank-blank!" snorted the seasick lion: "Before you uttered your infernal drivel the sea was calm, the sun was bright, and we were all comfortable. Blank-blank-blank! Now look at the storm. You've offended the Almighty, and we're all like enough to go to hell together!"

"I am sorry, sir," replied the astonished clergyman, "to hear you speak thus of my Lord and Master."

"Your Lord and Master!" roared the nauseated, disgusted, furious actor: "He never went to sea but once, and then he got out and walked ashore, and I wish to heaven that *I* could."

"Get 'em to tie this infernal ship to a rock, McArdle," he shouted, addressing his agent; "Tie her up, and let me get out of her!" The parson fled, and so that episode of travel was ended.

It was not only upon Forrest that McCullough expended his sportive humor. As a rule he would not "guy" a performance; but occasionally the temptation to playful mischief prevailed with him to break a custom. In 1876, Edwin Booth filled an engagement at the California Theatre, which was the most remunerative, up to that date, ever played on the American stage. Toward its close, on a night when the play was "Julius Cæsar," McCullough contrived a ludicrous incident of peculiar felicity. The cast included Edwin Booth, as *Brutus*; Lawrence Barrett, as *Cassius*; John McCullough, as *Marc Antony*; Henry Edwards, as *Cæsar*; with Charles B. Bishop and William Mestayer in auxiliary parts. In the scene of the

return from the Lupercal festival McCullough, who had privately instructed his confederates in the sport, walked away from Edwards, instead of keeping beside him, as the "business" requires, so that when *Cæsar*, perceiving the "lean and hungry *Cassius*," exclaimed, "Let me have men about me that are fat!" he was perplexed to find himself standing apart from the other players; and, upon that instant, Bishop, a corpulent person, of exceedingly comic aspect, came to his right, while Mestayer, a man of enormous size, appeared on his left,—each of those rotund players rubbing his stomach and sweetly smiling at the imperial chief. Edwards, a jovial soul, especially sensitive to fun, and easily "broken up," became convulsed with laughter; the austere *Cassius* had to turn his back to the house; and Booth, as *Brutus*, was compelled to cover his face with his mantle.

Of McCullough's sound judgment and correct taste in literature I recall a significant example—significant because it showed how entirely clear and right were his views of life and art. We happened to be lodging at the same hotel, the old

Tremont House, in Boston. It was late at night, and I was reading in bed. He had attended a social meeting, at Charlestown, at the home of his friend John Boyle O'Reilly, the Irish poet and patriot; and, on returning, he came to my room and sat with me for some time, talking of the persons whom he had met, and of the singular literary opinions expressed by them. "They have been telling me," he said, "that Walt Whitman is a poet, and they have been reading some of the spavined stuff that he has written. It is a *profanation* to talk of such a writer as a *poet*!" Then, blazing with emotion, he launched into a panegyric of poetry and a description of the poetic province—the ministry of beauty; the interpretation of nature; the alluring revealment of high ideals; the exaltation of the human soul. "A *catalogue* is not a *poem*," he said: "there is no such thing as *poetry* in mere animal life. The name of Poet is the grandest name that can be applied to any human being. Shakespeare was a poet. Shelley was a poet." He rose as he spoke, and he repeated, with amazing fluency and delicious modulation, many passages of Shelley's

Epipsychidion." Art could do no more. "*That* is poetry," he said; and all that he thus said is true.

The fads have their little day; but, sooner or later, the world comes back to the right standard—to beauty, purity, simplicity, truth. In McCullough's day there was no thought of devoting the theatre to the exposition of physical disease or to the analysis of morbid emotion and degenerate physical propensities. His breezy laugh would have blown the Ibsen bubble from the stage. He would have set the heel of amused contempt on all such sickly humbugs as Maeterlinck, Sudermann, and Shaw. His acting was of the heroic strain, and was best in parts that are emblematic of noble manhood and lofty and tender feeling; parts that implicate splendid deeds, fidelity to duty, self-sacrifice for love or honor; parts that move in the realm of the affections. In *Hamlet* he was little more than laboriously correct; but in *Virgilius*, Payne's *Brutus*, *Damon*, *King Lear*, *Othello*, and portions of *Riche-lieu*, he was magnificent. To see him in those great parts was to feel the essential dignity that is in human nature, and to be made happier

and better—the result that the stage ought always to accomplish, and always would accomplish if it were not so often perverted from its rightful province.

The wreck of McCullough's life,—for he passed away, a complete wreck, when only fifty-three,—was due, in so far as I could comprehend it, in part to inheritance of the fervid, imaginative Celtic temperament; in part to hard study, under harassing circumstances; in part to the strain of acting colossal characters; and in part to his genial good-fellowship, evinced in the custom of participating in an endless round of festivities. He was a man of magnificent physical constitution; he possessed great strength; and he seemed to think that his capacity of endurance had no limit. He loved to see people merry; he loved to be merry himself; and he never denied himself to society. In the merrymakings, the banquets, the midnight suppers, the club festivals, and all the myriad distractions of conviviality he took a prominent part; and all the while he was impersonating such exhaustive parts as *Virginius*, *Damon*, *Lucius Brutus*, *Macbeth*, *Othello* and *King*

Lear. The strain that he tried to bear, and for a while did bear without showing a trace of fatigue, would have killed a giant. There came a time when he was not unaware of the wisdom of prudence. "Do as I *say*," he once remarked to me, "not as I *do*." Something of his reckless prodigality of strength, in the conduct of life, must be attributed to excessive amiability combined with politic deference. His genius was not of that wild, weird, enchanting magnetism ("fire and air," as *Cleopatra* calls it) which dazzles and bewilders,—grasping the results of thought by intuition, and creating the results of art by the lightning flash of inspiration. He wrought with heedful care. He made himself sure of his ground, step by step. He was humble in spirit. He thought more of his vocation than of himself. He was genial and affectionate, and he wished to please everybody. Such natures, almost inevitably, sacrifice themselves to the exacting selfishness of the coteries of social life. Such a man as the Admirable Crichton,—excellent in all things, and not dubious of himself in anything,—can ride roughshod over everybody,

and take exemplary care of his own comfort. Men of slighter equipment and less self-assurance are constrained to circumspection. McCullough, once thoroughly embarked on the rising tide of histrionic popularity, had fixed his eyes on the point of highest eminence, and he esteemed it a necessity of his position to win the good will of every individual that came near him, if kindness could win it. In that respect he differed widely from Edwin Booth, who became like a marble statue upon the advent of a stranger; and likewise he differed widely from his great exemplar, Forrest, who disliked strangers and was apt to be surly toward them. McCullough, for instance, told me that, on a night when Forrest and himself were sitting in a Philadelphia railway station, waiting for a train, another traveller, aware of the famous tragedian's identity, was observed to be gazing on him with absorbed attention; whereupon the gruff old actor irritably inquired:

"Sir, do I *owe* you anything?"

"No, Mr. Forrest," answered the stranger, "and I'll take good care that you never *do*!"

McCullough would have made no such error. He had his failings: they were the failings that are annually condoned, if not celebrated, on every twenty-fifth day of January, by every Caledonian Club in the world, doing honor to the immortal memory of Robert Burns. Let them sleep in death. Misanthropy was not one of them.

In my personal experience of the last days of McCullough the incidents were strange and sad. I recall a night when, in London, I drove with him, in a hansom cab, from Cromwell Road to the Bristol Hotel, and when, having been entirely himself for several hours, he suddenly became quite insane, rolling his eyes from side to side, and gazing at me, now furtively and now openly, with an indescribable expression of menace—like the look of a tiger. I call to mind our last interview. I was walking one morning in Broadway, New York, with the brilliant Steele Mackaye, when suddenly I received a heavy blow on the shoulder and turning saw McCullough, who had struck at us with his cane to attract our attention. We asked him to go with us, and presently we were seated at a table in Delmonico's old restau-

rant, at Twenty-sixth Street. He had a lucid interval and thought of the past, and, looking at me earnestly, while the tears slowly filled his eyes, he warned me against waste of time and talent, and asked me always to remember that he was my friend. It was only for a few moments that this mood lasted, and then the light faded from his face and he was strange again,—murmuring, as he rose and walked away, the last words I ever heard him speak:

“Old and wretched; old and wretched; old and wretched!”

The last time that I ever looked on McCullough in life he was stretched upon a bed, in a dimly-lighted room, in a lunatic asylum at Bloomingdale. The door had been slowly and carefully opened by one of the attendant keepers, and I was permitted to enter the presence of the dying tragedian. He was fully, though carelessly dressed. He was in a deep slumber—limp, flaccid, helpless; the mere shattered remnant of what had once been manly strength, beauty, dignity and grace.

“Shall I wake him?” asked the attendant.

"No," I said; "don't wake him."

There was a solemn silence. The sleeper did not move. His head was resting on his clenched right hand. His face was pale, ghastly, and a little streaked with blood. He had fallen that morning (so the keeper said) in a corridor, where patients were allowed to walk, and so had cut and bruised himself. His left arm, listlessly extended, the hand partly closed, seemed strangely expressive of forlorn, piteous weakness.

The next time I saw him he was in his coffin, and his noble face, sweetly placid and grandly dignified, was, as I shall always think of it, tranquil with the peace of God.

VIII.

LAWRENCE BARRETT.

LAWRENCE BARRETT, when a young man, came to Boston and acted at the Museum, founded and then managed by Moses Kimball, and there I first saw him act, little dreaming that he would, one day, become an intimate friend of mine, and that I should be closely associated with some of the most important events and most interesting episodes of his professional career. He was then (1858) only twenty years old, but he had already been on the stage for several years; at first as call-boy, then as super, then as a player of small parts, and then as an essayist of leading business; and, artistically, he was prepared to seize any considerable opportunity that might be offered. Speaking to me, in after years, about that period in his career, he told me that he was then very poor; that he had accepted, in a sort of desperation, an engagement to act the entire

line of leading parts at the Museum,—*Romeo*, *Charles Surface*, *Harry Dornton*, *Claude Melnotte*, etc.,—without being equipped with a dress for any of them; and that he was placed in a distressing dilemma because required to provide his costumes. William Warren, the eminent comedian, was then, and long continued to be, the principal member of the Museum Company. “Warren saw that I was in trouble” (so Barrett said), “and spoke to me about it. I told him of my situation,—that I had neither costumes nor money with which to buy them. He led me to Curtis, the costumer, the actor who played ‘old men’ in our company, and he said: ‘Let Mr. Barrett have all the dresses he needs, and I will be responsible for the bill.’ So I obtained the clothes that I wanted, and was able to keep my engagement; and in time I paid for all—though nothing could pay for Warren’s kindness.” The first part that Barrett acted at the Museum was *Frederick Bramble*, in “The Poor Gentleman,” and thereafter, for two seasons at that house and one at the Howard Athenæum, he played many parts and became a local favorite. To some actors

Nature and Circumstance are early prodigal of fortune. To others Fate is sternly indifferent. Edwin Booth, for example, though his private life was darkened with much affliction, was, in his public career, from the beginning, greatly favored. All things,—even his hardships in the early California segment of his experience,—concurred to expedite his upward progress. Lawrence Barrett, on the contrary, was afforded no initiatory advantages. Nothing was ever done for him by anybody; and, until a late period of his life, little or nothing was ever yielded to him without begrudgment. His parents were poor; his boyhood was one of toil and want; aside from a little elementary schooling, he had no education; it was with difficulty that he learned to read and write and obtained access to books; his first employment in a theatre was that of a drudge, and at the outset he was friendless and alone. He, nevertheless, made his way to eminence in the dramatic profession; he developed and cultivated his mind; he acquired learning; he earned a competent fortune; he gained the friendship of many of the leading men of his time,—attracting such

diverse spirits as James A. Garfield, Mark Hanna, Alma-Tadema, Bayard Taylor, Phillips Brooks and Robert Browning; he adventured as a writer, and, in a memoir of Charlotte Cushman and in other sketches, he evinced literary taste and skill; he gave practical encouragement to the composition of plays; and, except Henry Irving, he surpassed every contemporary actor in the earnest, diligent, laborious promotion of every movement to augment the virtuous power and dignity of the stage. His life was one of restless ambition, nervous excitement, incessant struggle and unsparing labor, and he passed away, a worn-out man, at the early age of fifty-three. But he won a noble fame, and he left a beautiful memory.

Lawrence Barrett was born at Paterson, New Jersey, April 4, 1838. In childhood he was taken to Detroit, where his parents made their home, and where, after a fruitless trial of shop-keeping industries, he presently obtained a foothold in one of the local theatres. His position, at first, was very humble,—for his state was that of ignorance and penury. He possessed one book,



To William Gordon
with affectionate regards from his friend
James B. B. 1891

and only one,—a copy of Doctor Johnson's Dictionary,—which had been bestowed upon him by a benevolent actor. That he treasured; and, in after life, he related that he was accustomed to gather the candle-ends that had been thrown away in the dressing-rooms of the theatre, and by that means obtain light, so that he could study his treasure. In the season of 1858 he was cast for a small part in "The French Spy," and, later, he was entrusted with other minor characters. Then he obtained an engagement at Pittsburg, and for two years he acted in a stock company there, supporting visitant stars. One of those stars was the handsome blonde, Julia Dean,—about whom the lads and lassies, fifty years ago, were delirious with admiration,—and in her company he visited various Western towns; on one occasion acting *Clifford* to her *Julia*, in "The Hunchback," a play which, at that time, was highly esteemed. In 1856 he tried his fortune in New York, and soon he was engaged at Burton's Theatre, The Metropolitan, afterward (by Dion Boucicault) called The Winter Garden, where he first met Edwin Booth and

Charlotte Cushman and acted with them; as also he did with Burton, Charles Mathews, and other distinguished players. Then came the episode of his Boston experience; after which he acted in theatres of Philadelphia and Washington. In 1863-64 he was engaged in Edwin Booth's company, at the New York Winter Garden. At that time his artistic style was deeply influenced by the charm of Booth; so that, a little later, when he joined Lewis Baker in management of the Varieties Theatre, New Orleans, where they produced "*Richelieu*," he played the *Cardinal* in close imitation of Booth's performance. He did not, however, remain an imitator. On the contrary, in the lapse of time, his style became strongly individual and characteristic,—as much so as that of Macready in England, or that of Forrest in America. His first professional visit to England was made in 1867-68, when he acted at Liverpool. For some time after that venture he was associated with John McCullough in the management of the California Theatre, San Francisco. In 1870 he made the most conspicuous success of his career, as *Cassius*,—a part in

which he excelled all competitors, and in which he has not, in our time, had an equal. Presentments of "Julius Cæsar," in which he participated as *Cassius*, were of frequent occurrence during the next twenty years, and each of them was memorable. His second professional visit to England was made in 1884, when he acted at the London Lyceum as *Yorick* and as *Cardinal Richelieu*. In 1887 he assumed, at his own suggestion, the office of manager for Edwin Booth, and later, in conjunction with that great actor, he traversed the United States, directing Booth's business and sharing his labors and his triumphs. He died, suddenly, at the old Windsor Hotel, New York, on March 20, 1891, and was buried at Cohasset, Massachusetts; so near to the ocean that its waves almost break over his grave and its mournful music is his perpetual dirge.

Biography presents records of many men whose conduct seems to have been exclusively governed by the impulse of self-aggrandizement, and admiration appears to be expected for them; but biography also provides examples, much more edifying, of the building of character from un-

selfish motives, with fidelity to duty and with spontaneous allegiance to the public welfare. Lawrence Barrett labored to rise and aimed at the attainment of power; but he wrought by good means; he strove to exert a helpful influence for others; and he would have scorned to employ any unworthy expedient. He turned instinctively toward great parts in great plays. The scope and variety of his endeavor were denoted in the productions that he made, often at much expense and sometimes at heavy loss, of the poetic drama. His repertory included *Hamlet*, *Cassius*, *Shylock*, *Othello*, *Wolsey*, *Richard III*, *Macbeth* and *King Lear*, together with many parts, in comedy as well as tragedy, of lighter calibre and less distinction,—ranging from *Elliot Grey* to *David Garrick*, from *Richelieu* to *Gringoire*, and from *Alfred Evelyn* to *Lagardere*; but, outside of the beaten track, he acted in “Yorick’s Love”; “Pendragon,” a story of King Arthur; “Francesca da Rimini”; “The King of the Commons”; “The Duchess of Padua”; “A Blot on the Scutcheon”; “Ganelon,” a story of the days of Charlemagne”; “Rienzi”; “Hernani and The

Robbers"; and, just before his summons came, he was preparing to act in Tennyson's tragedy of "Becket." At first view, in *Claude Melnotte*, *Romeo* and the like, when Barrett was only twenty years old, he impressed me as an earnest, eloquent, picturesque, but not exceptional actor; it was not till afterward, when he had flamed forth in *King James* and in *Cassius*, that I came to estimate him at his true value as a man of genius. The actor who could express, as he did, the intellectual isolation, the innate, natural aristocracy, the indomitable spirit, the superb will, the lovely refinement and the deep feeling of Shakespeare's *Cassius*, was, beyond all question, "born in the purple." But his achievement in *Cassius*, brilliant though it was, did not provide the full measure of his powers. Situations dependent on rapid movement and sonorous eloquence were congenial with his distinctive attributes and faculties. The half-frenzied exultation of *Cassius*, after the assassination of *Cæsar*; the teeming rapture of *Lanciotto*, when he thinks himself loved by *Francesca*; *Yorick's* terrible delirium of agonizing jealousy; the wild joy of

King James when his beloved *Seyton* is vindicated—those and kindred paroxysms of terrific excitement stirred his nature to its depths and made him glorious in the display of tempestuous feeling; but it was in such parts as *Harebell* and *Gringoire* that he disclosed yet another side of his mind and spirit, rounding out the revelation of his being with the loveliness of simplicity, nobility, and gentle, poetic charm.

In the summer of 1882 Barrett and I crossed the ocean in company and visited many poetic shrines of Europe. Together we stood in the room of Shakespeare's birth; loitered along the rural pathway to Anne Hathaway's cottage; and mused beside the poet's sacred tomb. Together we passed many hours in Westminster Abbey; explored the venerable and storied Tower; and sought the romantic haunts of the old literary worthies of London. Together we viewed the manifold splendors of Paris; climbed the spire of Strasburg Cathedral; listened to the silver music of the bells of Heidelberg; sailed down the lovely Rhine from Mayence to Cologne; worshiped beauty and sublimity in the great cathedral of

that famous city; and gazed with solemn thought upon the statues of noble valor and patriotic devotion—Egmont and Horn—in beautiful Brussels. Many were the sights we saw, things memorable and not to be forgotten; but I recall no sight more touching to the heart than my companion's deep, fervent, loving delight in every object of historic import, or poetic association, or artistic grace that his eyes beheld. He was like a sweet, artless child. He was absolutely happy. He had escaped, for a while, from the ambitions and cares of the world. His soul was liberated and it stood clearly revealed,—pure, simple, honest, true. The austerity of his intellect dropped away, and he gave himself, without reserve, to peace and joy. Never can I forget his ecstasy of wonder and reverence when we stood in the vast, lonely nave of Canterbury Cathedral, and heard the devotional responses as they floated from the unseen choir. Once, on a lovely summer afternoon, we paused beside the tomb of the poet Gray, in the old churchyard of Stoke-Pogis, and, according to his wish, I repeated the immortal "Elegy"; and his eyes were filled with

tears as he listened to those exquisite words, spoken above the ashes of their inspired author. In scenes of that kind I saw Lawrence Barrett as he was.

In that year of our foreign tour Barrett had several plays under consideration, and in the course of the Atlantic voyage he read to me Lewis Wingfield's "Monmouth," a romantic drama, based on the tragic story of the unfortunate Duke, and also a new version of the tragedy of "Francesca da Rimini," which he had obtained from its author, George H. Boker—an American poet whose works are worthy of a greater vogue than they have ever obtained. E. L. Davenport had brought out the original draft of the piece, in 1855, at the old Broadway Theatre, New York, with Madame Ponisi and Charles Fisher in the cast, as *Francesca* and *Pépé*; but it was not then successful. On hearing Boker's new version I urged Barrett to produce it, feeling sure that he would give a superb performance of *Lanciotto*, a part uncommonly well suited to his temperament and style. That venture he decided to make, and then and there

we cut the piece and prepared it for the stage. In September, 1882, it was presented in Philadelphia, and Barrett's impassioned personation of *Lanciotto*, fervid with eloquence and magnetic with action, rewarded him, both then and later, with increased fame and abundant profit. That tour of ours, a fortunate accident, was marked with many pleasing incidents: a friendly meeting with Henry James, the novelist, whom Barrett much admired; an interesting interview with the beautiful Blanche Howard, who was then writing her novel of "Gwenn"; a day with the famous Miss Braddon, whose prolific pen has added so many volumes of fiction to the literature of her native land; a talk with my old friend, dead and gone now, the ever genial Duke of Beaufort; and many a social hour with Henry Irving, John Lawrence Toole, S. B. Bancroft, Arthur Sketchley, and the blithe lads of the Green Room and the Savage. Henry Irving and Ellen Terry were then acting, at the Lyceum, in "Romeo and Juliet," and we saw, with wonder and delight, that magnificent production,—a pageant of the richest and finest garniture ever

bestowed on that immortal poem of love and grief. Edwin Booth was also then acting in London, at the Princess' Theatre, and he and the poet Aldrich, and the quaint and genial Laurence Hutton, joined in our excursions and festivals. Once, at nearly midnight, with the sanction of a kindly policeman, we strolled into the cloisters of Westminster Abbey, and long remained there, viewing that weird, sepulchral scene by the cold light of the stars.

One night there was an assemblage at the dwelling of the popular English actor, Wilson Barrett,—then at the meridian of his excellent repute,—accompanied with everything that kindness could prompt or hospitality provide of luxury and joy. The company consisted entirely of men. The house, so Mr. Barrett told us, had been the residence of that great writer,—the ablest, perhaps, of all women that ever wrought with a pen,—George Eliot; and he said that, succeeding her as a tenant, he found the condition of the place indicative of its having been the abode of an aged and tired occupant. He had repaired, redecorated and refurnished it in a sumptuous

manner, so that it was a veritable bower of beauty. Our session lasted all night, and a merrier group, I think, was never seen. One incident, in particular, made it memorable. Henry Irving, who had arranged to make his first visit to America, took occasion to ask every member of the numerous party to give an opinion as to the choice of an opening part for him to act in New York. The views expressed were as various as the persons who expressed them, and many characters were named and many plays discussed. Lawrence Barrett favored the choice of *Charles I*, one of the most beautiful of Henry Irving's personations. Others were for *Hamlet*. It was my good fortune to persuade the great actor to make his first American appearance as *Mathias* in "The Bells." He reached his decision then, and he declared it, and the purpose thus formed was, in time, accomplished. "I shall act on my friend's counsel," said Irving: "he says that I shall be under great excitement on the night of my first appearance in New York; that my audience will also be much excited; that the agitation of the time will help me in 'The Bells'—which

is true--and that it is best to take advantage of that condition; to present a novelty; and, above all, to avoid inviting comparison with any established favorite. I shall act *Mathias*." Only three or four of that company—"sad remains of friends"—are living now:

"Like clouds that rake the mountain summits, or waves that
own no curbing hand,
So fast has brother followed brother, from sunlight to the
sunless land."

On the night before Irving arrived in America Lawrence Barrett assembled a notable company at his dwelling in New York,—a spacious apartment at the northeast corner of Fifth Avenue and Twenty-eighth Street. He was, at that time, affectionately fond of Henry Irving, and deeply desirous to insure for him a cordial welcome and a great success. Again the festivity continued until the dawn, when we repaired to the North River, and, embarking in Colonel E. A. Buck's steam-yacht, which had been kindly provided by him for the purpose, crossed the bay of New York to meet the *Britannic*, with Irving and his company on board, in the Narrows. It was a

cold and dreary morning. The noble ship was already in sight when we reached the neighborhood of the Quarantine Station, and soon we were permitted to greet our friends and receive them aboard our yacht. The meeting between Irving and Barrett, on the gangplank of the *Britannic*,—where they stood for a little while, bare-headed and with clasped hands,—lives in my memory as a spectacle of peculiar and touching beauty. Men more intellectual have never graced the stage. They were of the same age and of kindred temperament: pale, thin, ascetic, dignified, with dark, piercing eyes, thoughtful faces, and hair just touched with silver; and, as I viewed them there, I saw, prefigured, that cordial union and brotherhood of art which has since been established between the theatres of England and these States. We sailed back to the city and escorted Irving to the Brevoort House, the first building he ever entered in New York. His prodigious triumph on the American stage is a theme of history. It was the hand of Lawrence Barrett that gave him the first welcome, and toward Lawrence Barrett Irving's feeling was always

gentle and his conduct always generous as well as just.

There came a time when Barrett did not think so, and his friendship for Irving cooled.

"I find him changed," said Irving to me, "and I should be glad if you could tell me why."

"That is easily done," I answered. "After he had played a losing engagement at your London Theatre, presenting '*Richelieu*,' you, in your next season, produced the same play; and he took the fancy that you meant to suggest an invidious contrast between his failure and your success."

"But," said Irving, "*Richelieu* had long been one of my parts. I had resolved to play it in America, in the next season. I wanted to do it then in London, so that my company would be in readiness. I never had the slightest thought of injury or unkindness to Barrett. Was I to discard the part of the *Cardinal* because another actor had played it?"

Irving did subsequently present *Richelieu* in America, at Chicago, and he underlined it for New York; but, as I knew that his performance of the *Cardinal* was not so fine as Edwin Booth's

famous embodiment,—long in possession of the stage and of the public fancy—I persuaded him not to act it in the metropolis; and he laid it aside. But, unhappily, Barrett never ceased to cherish resentment of a fancied injury:

“And to be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness in the brain.”

In person Barrett was not above the middle height, but his inherent dignity of demeanor invested him with peculiar distinction. His head was finely formed; his features were regular; his face was pale; his eyes, dark, lurid, and deeply sunken, were brilliant with intense lustre. His figure was thin. His hair, originally dark brown, was sprinkled with silver. His glance was quick, eager and comprehensive. He possessed a voice of extraordinary compass, very various, deeply sympathetic, and at times pathetically sweet. He could sing; and in the part of *James Harebell*, which he loved to play, he used that fine faculty with touching effect. His vitality, alike of body and mind, was prodigious, and wherever he came he diffused a sense of seething unrest. In temperament he was pensive, sad, sometimes gloomy,

always inclined to introspection and mental disquietude; but he had a keen sense of humor; in social intercourse he often was playful and droll; he could tell a comic story exceedingly well and his memory was abundantly stored with comical incidents of the stage. Jefferson mentioned this to me, with special appreciation, at the banquet to Edwin Booth, at Delmonico's, New York, in the summer of 1880 (June 15). "I have passed the morning with Barrett, at *The Players*," he said, "and we have been telling stories to each other; and as we came across Madison Square he surveyed the trees and suddenly remarked: 'Joe, the *chestnuts* are blooming splendidly to-day.' "

Barrett was often the cause of mirth in others, but he seldom figured as its victim. Once, however, when Louis James was acting *Brutus* to his *Cassius* he had that experience; for *Brutus*, toward the close of the first act of "*Julius Cæsar*," grasping his hand, and fervently ejaculating, "Till then, my noble friend, *chew upon this*," left in his grip a large plug of tobacco, neatly encased in gleaming silver foil; holding which

trophy, Barrett, as *Cassius*, had to deliver the lines that close the act, in the stage version then used.

Barrett's intellectual character, literary taste, and artistic style were formed at the period when the writings of Macaulay, De Quincey, Kingsley and Carlyle were pouring from the press, and they were those of a thinker and a scholar. His reading took the direction of Roman history and the classics. With Gibbon's incomparable work he was especially familiar. He loved the martial ballads of Campbell and the stirring lyrical and narrative strains of Sir Walter Scott. He loved Macaulay's "Lays of Ancient Rome." It was a luxury of enjoyment to hear him read "Horatius,"—the copious sonority of his sympathetic voice, the fervor of his passionate spirit, and the beauty of his elocution uniting to produce an effect of perfect art. One of his favorite poems was "The Lady of the Lake." The historic type that especially inspired him was Napoleon Bonaparte. The American character that he most admired,—and not only admired but idolized,—was that of Daniel Webster. Those peculiarities

help to reveal him,—a studious, fastidious, fervid, sombre, somewhat lonely man; isolated and a little embittered by a long and arduous conflict with unpropitious circumstances; nervous, impetuous, restless; highly imaginative and keenly intellectual; justly conscious of his essential merit, and, at times, resentful of the world's tardy recognition of it; eager and incessant in splendid artistic effort; impatient of dullness; contemptuous of low ideals; scornful of sloth and mediocrity; ambitious to reach the absolute leadership of his profession; and prodigal of energy, and even of life itself, for the attainment of greatness in his art. Prosperity, when at last it came to him, softened the rigor of his habitual mood, relaxed his mordant intellectual activity, and made him sympathetic and gentle. But he never weakened in purpose. He never drifted nor dreamed. If his life had been prolonged he would have gained in serenity, but he would still have been constant in attempting great enterprises; he would still have seized every opportunity; he would still have battled with all contestants for the empire of the stage. He was a vital incarnation of tremendous

force, and he was prematurely destroyed by the tempest that surged in his soul.

The last scene of Barrett's life was inexpressibly pathetic. He had ventured far. He had incurred heavy responsibilities. Anxiety preyed on his mind, and continuous toil exhausted his body. His last appearance on the stage was made at the Broadway Theatre, New York, on March 18, 1891, at *De Mauprat*, in "Richelieu." Edwin Booth was acting the *Cardinal*. Barrett came early to the theatre, went to his dressing-room, and, without removing his hat or overcoat, seated himself, tilted his chair against the wall, and covered his face. Thus Booth found him—ill, dejected, suffering, yet resolute. He had momentarily broken down, and had been crying; but he recovered himself and insisted that the performance should proceed. At the end of the third act, when the *Cardinal* is lying on the bed and simulating death, he bent over Booth and whispered:

"I cannot go on!"

Another player had to take his place, and so, for Lawrence Barrett, the last curtain fell. The

next day Booth called to see him at the Windsor Hotel.

"Do not come near to me, Edwin," he said, "for my disease may be infectious, and you must be very careful."

A few hours later he was dead.

I looked upon him in death, and saw, in his pallid, emaciated face, the tranquil beauty of perfect rest. All the turmoil was over; all the pain had passed away; and, in reading his name on the coffin, I thought of Wordsworth's touching apostrophe:

Thou soul of God's best earthly mould,
Thou happy soul! and can it be
That these two words of glittering gold
Are all that must remain of thee!

IX.

MARY ANDERSON.

THE stage life of Mary Anderson was comparatively brief (1875-1889), but it was brilliant with achievement, and, in its honesty, sincerity, simplicity, radical worth, and beneficent influence, it was beautiful. As I recall it, through a mist of years, it seems, in memory, a pleasant dream; for about the thought of it there is an atmosphere of gentle loveliness, affecting the mind like a strain of music heard at distance on a moonlit summer sea. It was not all tranquillity; it had its clouds of care,—“the very source and fount of day,” as the poet Tennyson has told us, is “dashed with wandering isles of night,”—but it was right in motive, it was free from contention, it was devoid of reproach, it was guided and governed by a noble ambition, and its results were good. The remembrance of such a career naturally expresses itself in poetic imagery.

Mary Anderson made her first appearance on the stage, when she was only sixteen years old, at Barney Macauley's Theatre, in Louisville, Kentucky, November 25, 1875. She came out as *Juliet*. I did not see that performance, but my old friend, George F. Fuller, artist and theatrical manager (he died July 4, 1905, aged 85), who was present, told me that, notwithstanding the crudity inseparable from youth and inexperience, it was a performance of extraordinary force, feeling and promise. Its paramount beauty, he said, was its vocalism. Miss Anderson's voice, indeed, was always her predominant charm: certain tones in it,—so thrilling, so full of wild passion and inexpressible melancholy,—went straight to the heart, and brought tears into the eyes. The voice is the exponent of the soul. You can paint your face; you can pad your person; you can wear a wig; you can walk in shoes that augment your height; you can, in various ways, change your body; but your voice will, sooner or later, reveal you as you are. Just as the style of the writer discloses his character, so the quality of the voice discloses the actor's nature. It seems unlikely

that Miss Anderson's melting, tragic tones were uttered in any of her girlish impartments; but the copious, lovely voice was there, and it gained her first victory. The time had not yet come when she could, actually and absolutely, *embody Juliet*. It did come, and her success in that part was decisive and unequivocal. The most romantic and the most passionate *Juliet* of our epoch was that of Adelaide Neilson; the most essentially woman-like and splendidly tragical *Juliet* that our stage has known within the last fifty years was that of Mary Anderson. No other actress ever spoke as she did the abject, piteous, despairing question, in which *Juliet's* whole being is expressed:

Is there no pity sitting in the clouds
That sees into the bottom of my grief?

It always seemed to me that Miss Anderson was exceptionally fortunate in the splendid amplitude and freedom of her style. Most actors are constrained to give scrupulous attention to artistic method in acting. Some of them, in recent years, have favored the reading public with treatises on that subject, embodying precepts and rules. Miss Anderson was unfettered. I had

the good fortune to see and study every one of her embodiments. She acted, during her thirteen years on the stage, *Parthenia*, in "Ingomar"; *Bianca*, in "Fazio"; *Julia*, in "The Hunchback"; *Pauline*, in "The Lady of Lyons"; *Evadne*, in the play of that name; *Berthe*, in "Roland's Daughter"; The *Duchess of Torrenueva*, in "Faint Heart Never Won Fair Lady"; *Galatea*, in "Pygmalion and Galatea"; *Clarice*, in "Tragedy and Comedy"; *The Countess*, in "Love"; *Meg Merrilies*, in "Guy Mannering"; *Ion*, in the tragedy so called; *Juliet*; *Rosalind*; *Desdemona* (once only); *Perdita* and *Hermione*, in "A Winter's Tale"; and *Lady Macbeth*. In each of those parts she gave an individual and potential impersonation; but I was always impressed, first and most of all, by the *inevitable* quality in her performances. She appeared to have grasped each character by intuition, to have entered bodily into it at once, and to be living it without conscious volition. Study she must have given to those characters, and the effect of art decidedly she produced, in the embodiment of them; but I always thought that "she builded better than she



MARY ANDERSON

*"What y' two
Mistake do
not make at
all!"*



knew." Her acting was simple and graceful with the fluency of Nature. I have heard her call it "work," but it never seemed "work" to the spectator. There was, in particular, such a charm of spontaneity, simplicity and natural loveliness about her personation of *Parthenia* that nobody could resist its appeal. In the period before she went to London, to act at the Lyceum Theatre, she did me the honor to ask for my counsel as to the professional course which it would be wise for her to pursue in that city. I had already earnestly advised her to visit England,—believing, and declaring, that she would derive both personal happiness and professional benefit from observation of the rural beauties and the venerable antiquities of that beautiful country, and from contact with its cultivated society; and, although she playfully deprecated my enthusiasm about the old land, she had made one English visit (1878), which she greatly enjoyed. The second visit (1883) was to be professional; and I begged her to promise that, no matter what opposition might be made to her plan, she would insist on beginning her London engagement

with *Parthenia*. She was amused at the request, but she gave the promise; and, fortunately, she kept it.

Soon after her arrival in London she wrote to tell me that the play of "Ingomar" was not approved, and that she had been strongly urged to make her first appearance as *Juliet*. The tragedy of "Romeo and Juliet" had been produced at the London Lyceum, with great splendor, in 1882—Henry Irving appearing as *Romeo*, and Ellen Terry as *Juliet*. The fine scenery remained in the theatre, and all was in readiness for another fair Capulet. I answered by reminding the actress of her promise. To the eye of experience the peril of the situation seemed obvious. That great actress Ellen Terry was then the imperial favorite. Her performance of *Juliet* (she was, I remember, a marvel of personal beauty in that part), had been enthusiastically accepted. The dramatic press had indorsed it. The exclusive dramatic audience was of one mind in its favor. The advent of a young player from America, a stranger to the London public, would have proved a disastrous failure if it had been made

with even the slightest appearance of a challenge to the reigning queen. Furthermore, the production of a Shakespearean tragedy always entails serious responsibility and hard labor upon the press. In dealing with the newspapers it is wise to provide an object of harmless attack. I felt sure that Mrs. Lovell's fanciful, romantic, old-fashioned play would draw all the critical fire, and that the new actress,—superb in her beauty and winning in her childlike loveliness,—would escape censure. The result justified that expectation. The play of "Ingomar" was, almost unanimously, condemned as either archaic or insipid or both, but the actress who, weighted with such a drama, could so touch the feelings and charm the fancy was found to be "alone the Arabian bird." Mary Anderson, in short, obtained a hearing and was accepted for herself; and from that hour her conquest of the British public was assured. She made a brilliant success as *Galatea* in the summer of 1884, and in the autumn of that year she aroused general enthusiasm by her acting of *Juliet*,—a performance which, by that time, the foreign audience was willing to consider.

It was not approved by all judges, but it elicited abundant commendation, and it gained for the adventurous young actress the valuable admiration of many powerful friends.

Mary Anderson, on the stage, had to make her way from comparative obscurity, and at the first, contrary to the common belief, her pathway was not one of roses. Artistically, however, she began "at the top,"—where, as Daniel Webster said, there is always plenty of room. Genius and beauty can, sometimes, so begin, wisely and to advantage; but, in general, that course is not judicious. The beginner, in this case, acted on the advice of Charlotte Cushman, who perceived her natural endowments, and must have discerned in her an exceptional fitness for the dramatic profession. Just as Burns was born to write poetry, Mary Anderson was born to act. That fact the veteran actress divined; and though firm in the faith that, as she expressed it, "the art of sailing a ship cannot be learned by entering at the cabin window," she knew that there are exceptions to all rules. The origin of genius has not been ascertained. It happens—and that is all

we know about it. The antecedents of Mary Anderson afford no explanation of her proclivity for the stage. She was born in the Eagle Hotel, Sacramento, California, July 28, 1859. Her father, Charles H. Anderson, was a young Englishman who had come to America to seek his fortune. An old comrade of mine,—Clifton W. Tayleure, actor, dramatic author and manager, long since dead and gone,—told me that he knew him; that he served as an officer in the Confederate Army; and that he died early in the Civil War. His grave is in Magnolia Cemetery, at Mobile, Alabama. Her mother, Antonia Leugers, of Philadelphia, was a beautiful woman, of German descent and of rigorous Catholic principles. Neither of her parents was theatrical. Her mother, after some time of widowhood, married Dr. Hamilton Griffin, of Louisville, Kentucky, where, for a time, Mary Anderson was an inmate of a Roman Catholic convent-school. She was reared in the Catholic faith, by Father Anthony Miller, a Franciscan priest, her mother's uncle,—a man of extensive learning and exalted character. She left school before she was four-

teen years of age. As a child she had seen some of the performances of Edwin Booth, which had touched her heart and fired her fancy. To such a degree, indeed, was she influenced by Booth's acting that she learned some of the parts she had seen him perform,—*Hamlet*, *Richelieu*, *Wolsey* and *Richard III*,—and acted them in private; and also she learned and acted Schiller's *Joan of Arc*. Her resolute purpose to become an actress (for, even in girlhood, she manifested exceptional strength of will), prevailed over the scruples of most of her pious relatives. Doctor Griffin, her stepfather, speaking to me of that period in her experience, said that her insistence was irresistible, and that, at last, he was constrained to go with her to the principal theatre of Louisville and ask for a trial of her talents. Then came her performance of *Juliet*. The verdict was favorable, and the manager, Macauley, specially incited thereto by an approving word from the tragedian John McCullough, gave to her a regular engagement, beginning January 20, 1876—from which time until the season of 1888-89 she was in continual practice of her profession. She

first appeared in New York in 1877, at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, and thereafter she made annual tours of the country, and so laid the foundation of a brilliant renown. Her professional ventures in England ensued, and she became a favorite abroad as well as at home. Her acting was seen with delight in Scotland and Ireland, as well as in the provincial cities of England. On June 17, 1890, she was married to Mr. Antonio de Navarro, and since then she has dwelt in retirement, only occasionally emerging to read and to sing for the benefit of the poor of London. Her home is at Broadway, Worcestershire, England; and her friends are glad to know that she is, as she deserves to be, one of the happiest women in the world.

Fortunate in her choice of a career and fortunate in her management of it, Mary Anderson was especially fortunate in her retirement from public life at a time when her renown was at its height. To the stage, and to society—so continuously and deeply affected by the stage—her withdrawal was not simply a deprivation, it was a bereavement; for it greatly reduced the public

store of innocent pleasure, and it greatly weakened the inspiring and ennobling influence of the acted drama. But her exertions had been great and continuous; as an heroic actress, she had reached the zenith of achievement; her health required relief from care; and she left the scene before the lights had begun to darken and while yet a time remained for the enjoyment of that life of the affections which is the chief blessing of our mortal state. She did not take a formal farewell of the theatre. Her last appearance occurred at Washington, in the spring of 1889, and the last part that she acted was *Hermione*. As a poet, William Wilson, has written:

“She waned not as light from the landscape at even,
As mist from the mountain or snow from the hill—
But passed as a star from the azure of heaven,
A flash from the cloud or a ray from the rill.”

It is a sign of Mary Anderson's nobility that she attracted, and always kept, the esteem and affectionate regard of such noble natures as Edwin Booth, John McCullough, Lawrence Barrett and Joseph Jefferson, among actors, and of Longfellow, Tennyson, Lord Lytton and Aubrey de Vere, among poets. Staunch and valued

friends of hers also were Antoinette Sterling, the Earl of Pembroke, Professor Blackie, Alma-Tadema, Frank Millet and William Black. With Longfellow she was a special favorite, and she derived lasting benefit from his friendship and his counsel. No person, indeed, ever came near that exalted, benignant, gentle spirit without reason for special gratitude. Longfellow was the most authentic, comprehensive, sympathetic and important of the poets of America. His works, while expressing the better spirit of our country, are a voice of human nature and a comfort to human hearts; and they possess that perfection of form without which poetic expression is incomplete and ineffective. As a man he was the incarnation of charity, generosity, sweetness and grace; a man whom to know was to reverence, and the remembrance of whose character and example is a continual impulse to virtue. Nothing could better indicate the essential benignity of Longfellow's disposition than the remark he once made to Miss Anderson: "Never lose an opportunity of giving pleasure; it will make you happier and better."

It was my good fortune to begin my literary life (1854) under the personal influence of that rare poet, and, throughout a friendship of thirty years, I knew him well and loved him dearly. His death, which befell in 1882, was the occasion of some reminiscences and an elegy of mine—eliciting from Miss Anderson this graceful and tender recognition, which I venture to print because of its glimpse of a gentle woman and a great man:

APRIL 18, 1882.

My dear Mr. Winter:

Thanks for your kind letter. Although it was a very long time coming, it was not the less welcome; and the Easter cards, which were very pretty, and the article and poem on Longfellow. I think the "memoir" one of the best things you have ever done. I cried as I read it, and think you must have cried as you wrote it. The poem I have hidden away with my few treasures, among which are several letters from Longfellow: I think it is exquisitely pathetic. How proud and happy the good man of whom you wrote would have been, could he have seen what

sweet, kind things you have said of him! I spent a morning with him, at his request, just about four weeks before his death; and it was one of the happiest mornings of my life. I can see him yet—so plainly—as he stood at the window (he was too ill to hand me to the carriage, as he always had done), smiling, and kissing his hand, till a turn in the road hid him. The new-fallen snow and the bright sunlight made him look radiant as he stood there.

He had received from Cross the inkstand of Tom Moore, which pleased him very much. He spoke of your Trip to England. Try to come to see me this week, and I will tell you all about him then. . . . Don't forget. Good-by. Your friend as ever,

MARY ANDERSON.

There is an order of mind, prevalent in all communities, that feels itself rebuked by the impact of intellectual character. That order of mind complained, of Miss Anderson's acting, that it was "cold." The truth is that beneath a calm exterior that actress veiled, without concealing, great tenderness of feeling, deep human sympathy, an impulsive temperament, exquisite sen-

sibility and an almost perilous activity of poetic imagination. On some occasions, with intimate friends, she would yield to a mood of frolic—the mood that was so delicious in her embodiment of *Perdita*: she had a deep and quick sense of humor, and she heartily enjoyed mirth. In other moods she seemed withdrawn into herself: dark, lonely, and estranged from all human companionship. At such times she liked to walk alone, in solitary places; to muse in the hallowed churchyard of Stratford; to scale the summit of Arthur's Seat, in Edinburgh; to haunt the vaulted aisles of Canterbury; to face the storm, on the wind-swept cliffs of Brighton. The tremulous quality of her imagination and her acute sensibility to psychic influence were evinced in a description that she gave to me, eighteen years ago, of a singular experience in "a haunted room" at Knebworth, in Hertfordshire, the country seat of the Earl of Lytton.

On one of many visits to her friend Lady Lytton, Miss Anderson was ushered to a room that was strange to her, the one that she had occupied on occasions of previous visits being in

possession of another guest. It was a large red and gold room, hung with ancient tapestry, and, in a smaller room adjoining, with a door between them, was lodged her maid. An evening had been cheerfully passed, partly in the playing of a game devised to test the readiness of memory—given any letter of the alphabet, each player to write, within five minutes, as many as possible of distinguished names beginning with that letter. Thus there was no predisposing cause for dark imaginings or superstitious dread. The letter A had been proposed, and Miss Anderson had failed to think of many names beginning with it; but after she retired,—in a great bed, with posts, canopy, and curtains,—she reflected on that game, and she then remembered several famous names beginning with A. The hour was about two o'clock A. M. There was a dim light in the room. Suddenly she grew icily cold and was greatly agitated with an inexplicable fear that caused violent beating of the heart. Then she heard a faint rustling, like the brushing of a garment against the tapestry, followed by a sound as of light footsteps. She tried to speak, but could only whisper

her maid's name. That she whispered several times, but could not speak aloud or move. She saw nothing, but presently heard a deep, pathetic sigh, seemingly at the foot of the bed. The next moment she had a frightful sensation of being seized by the shoulders and held in a convulsive grasp. At that she gave a loud cry, and the seeming hands dropped away. The waiting-woman, pale with fear, instantly appeared at the door, holding a lighted candle, and asked, "Have you seen it, Miss?"—and then said that she had heard her mistress's first whisper, but could not stir, because "something was in the room" and "she was held to her bed." The two hastily dressed themselves, left the room, and sought refuge with the governess.

The next day, being told of these occurrences, Lord and Lady Lytton received the narrative with the smile of incredulity that, in the morning, customarily greets stories of preternatural environment over night. From the gravity with which the actress spoke, I derived the impression that she believed the visitation to have been that of a spirit. The experience interested me, be-

cause of the singular fact that two persons, in separate rooms, without any previous prompting to ghostly fancy, should have experienced, simultaneously, the same strange sensation of being held down by unseen hands. No explanation was ever made. If there was a story about the room, it was not mentioned; but it came to the knowledge of those interested that the servants at Knebworth,—an ancient house, associated with Richard III, who is said to have lodged there,—dreaded and avoided “the red and gold room,” and that a venerable relative of the family, who knew the mansion well, had declined to occupy it. The room was the one in which that eccentric, weird being, old Lord Lytton, the novelist, died.

The most instructive remembrance that can be recorded of Mary Anderson as an actress is that she made her public appeal and reared the noble fabric of her fame on *acting*. Much is heard, in these days, about “producing syndicates,” and much is heard about actors who are running up and down the earth in quest of “something new.” Mary Anderson was aware of the truth that *great acting is always new*, and she was content

to choose the great parts in old drama, and to act them in a superb manner. The example should not be disregarded. A good new play is always welcome; but the dramatic literature already existent abounds in opportunity for the actor, and the vital need of our stage is, not more plays, but more and better *acting*. The "business" of "producing" plays is, intrinsically, of no more importance to the public than the business of producing pickles. There is no greater infliction at this time than the everlasting, sickening announcement that "Shadrach presents." Such a woman as Sarah Siddons, such a man as Edmund Kean, would liberate and impel awakening, inspiring, and ennobling forces that might soon change the whole complexion of the American theatre, so heavily burdened with mediocrity, so cruelly oppressed with the spirit of trade. One such blaze of elemental power as that which made Mary Anderson glorious in the frenzy of *Bianca*, one such burst of colossal emotion as that which made Richard Mansfield imperial and splendid in the tent-scene of "Richard III," is worth a whole hecatomb of the paltry, jack-straw, tailor-made

plays that are turned out, every hour, from the perpetual trash-mill of this shopkeeping time.

One of the saddest accompaniments of human life is the decay of feeling. Nothing is ever forgotten; but, in the lapse of years, remembrance is no longer invested with the glow of emotion. I lately read the tribute of an old stager to the memory of Malibran. She must have been a wonder of loveliness and enchantment; but the superlatives, freely used, served only to reveal the effort of the veteran to awaken an enthusiasm that was dead. Sometimes, in poetry and in eloquence, the noble emotions that surge through the human heart are seized at their topmost height of passionate ardor, and saved in immortal words; but, mostly, our feelings break and subside, like the ineffectual waves that beat the shore. In the personality that Mary Anderson's acting disclosed,—or, certainly, suggested,—there was the fulfillment of an inspiring ideal of innocence, purity, healthful, exultant joy, intimate communion with Nature, and perfect happiness in perfect goodness; in the thought of which a golden age of art seemed easily possible and a

world redeemed from care. But words are un-
availing to reproduce the feeling that her act-
ing inspired, when, at last, in the prime of her
development, she had attained to her full intel-
lectual and spiritual stature, and to the full con-
trol of her extraordinary gifts. Fair; tall; of an
imperial figure; her features regular; her change-
ful blue eyes, placid as a summer lake or blazing
with the fire of roused imagination; her noble
head, enwreathed with its copious wealth of
golden hair; her smile, the diamond sparkle of
morning light; her gestures, large, wide, graceful,
free; her movement, at times electrical with ac-
tion, at times pathetically eloquent of slow, wan-
dering grief or the stupor of despair; her voice,
clear, smooth, silvery, ranging through many
moods, from the ripple of arch, bewitching mirth
to the low moan of anguish, the deep whisper of
passion or the clarion note of power—she filled
the scene with her presence, and she filled the
hearts of her audience with a refreshing sense of
delightful, ennobling conviction of the possible
loveliness and majesty of the human soul. I
think that this was the sum of her service to art

and to society. Many pages might be written about electrical points in her personations of character: her denotement of *Juliet's* desolation, after parting, in the lonely midnight, from the last human being whom she may ever behold; her revelation of *Hermione's* awful despair, when she covers her face with her mantle, and falls in deathlike trance; her simplicity and piquant archness when giving the flowers, as *Perdita*, contrasted with her soul-subduing agony in *Bianca's* supplication to her stony-hearted, exultant, scornful rival: but that would require the wide domain of an essay, and this is but a glimpse. The decisive fact suffices that this actress was one of the authentic messengers of Heaven who shed a light on this world and, in the hearts of its weary workers, rekindle the sacred fires of hope and trust.

One of the cherished memories of my life is of an autumn afternoon, many years ago, in old Paddington Churchyard, in London. It was a Sunday, and the neighboring streets were deserted and still. The sky, overcast with mistlike clouds, was gray and dim. The leaves were falling. The twilight was coming slowly, and a faint

breeze was idly stirring the thin, withering grass. No sound was heard save of rustling foliage and sighing wind. I was standing at the grave of Sarah Siddons, illustrious actress of the Past; and beside me, pensive and mute, looking down upon the mould, stood Mary Anderson, auspicious actress of the Present. There, on the one side, a few words, cut in marble, to record the end of a glorious life: the garlands dead; the music hushed; the pageant vanished. Here, on the other side, beauty in its radiance; youth in its triumph; genius in its power; fame in its glory. The contrast and the monition were too deep for words. We laid a few flowers on that grave and turned away in silence.

X.

ADELAIDE NEILSON.

It was noticed of King Charles the First, and long before the catastrophe in which he perished it was mentioned, that there was in his countenance an expression that seemed to presage a calamitous death. There are faces in which the doom of a sorrowful destiny is dimly prefigured, if it is not clearly revealed. Such a face, radiant yet mournful, was that of the actress, Adelaide Neilson, whose image now rises in my remembrance as one of the brightest and saddest visions of the stage life of the last fifty years. Her story, so much of it as concerns the student of dramatic achievement, can be briefly told.

Adelaide Neilson was the child of a strolling actress, named Browne, and was born, out of wedlock, in, or near, the city of Leeds, England, about 1847. Her birthday was March 8. In childhood she bore the name of Elizabeth Bland,

her mother having become the wife of a mechanic named Bland, resident at Skipton, in Yorkshire. Her girlhood was passed in the village of Guiseley, where she worked in a factory and as a nurserymaid. When she was about fifteen years old she left her home and made her way to London. Various romantic tales have been recorded in print concerning her way of life at that time: all of them are untrue. When she had become auspiciously known as an actress the inventive faculty of the advertiser was employed to make a narrative of her origin and proceedings, and the public was apprised that she was the child of a Spanish father and an English mother; born at Saragossa; reared in affluence; educated in France and Italy; taught seven languages; and, finally, embarked in a theatrical career, because of impoverished fortune combined with irrepressible genius. The fact is that she was a nameless, untutored English girl, a waif and a wanderer, and that her early experience was commonplace and unhappy. Soon after she reached London she obtained employment, because of her beauty, as a member of the ballet at one of the theatres,

and in that way she began her professional career. In the spring of 1865, after having received some instruction from the veteran actor, John Ryder, she appeared at Thorne's Theatre, in Margate, long a training-school for novices, where she made a favorable impression. In the July following she was brought out at the New Royalty Theatre, London, in the character of *Juliet*. Her achievement was not considered extraordinary, but it attracted some favorable attention, and she was thus enabled to proceed in practice of the art to which she had determined to devote her life.

Among the parts that she acted, during the period of her novitiate, were *Gabrielle de Savigny*, in "The Huguenot Captain," by Watts Phillips; *Victorine*, in a play bearing that name; and *Nelly Armroyd*, in "Lost in London." Phillips was pleased with her acting; so was Joseph Knight, one of the most considerate and kindly critics associated with the London press; and so was the expert dramatist, Dr. Westland Marston; and all of them exerted a friendly influence to promote her professional advance-

ment. To Doctor Marston, in particular, she was indebted for practical counsel and guidance.

In 1868 she had become an experimental travelling star, acting *Rosalind*, Bulwer's *Pauline*, and Knowles' *Julia*; but she was not at first successful in her ambitious endeavor, and during the next three or four years she strove with circumstance as best she might, sometimes acting in metropolitan stock companies, and sometimes taking a position of more prominence. One of the expedients that she early adopted was that of a dramatic recital, given at St. James' Hall, London. Long afterward she repeated that recital in America, with brilliant effect. Some of the parts that she played, at various London theatres, were: *Lillian*, in Doctor Marston's "Life for Life"; *Madame Vidal*, in "A Life Chase," by John Oxenford and Horace Wigan; and *Mary Belton*, in "Uncle Dick's Darling." In 1870 she gained a conspicuous success as *Amy Robsart*, a part that admirably suited her, in a play based on Sir Walter Scott's novel of "Kenilworth"; and in 1871 she obtained critical admiration as *Rebecca*, in a play based on Sir Walter Scott's

"Ivanhoe." By that time she had proved herself an auspicious power in the dramatic world, and, after making a successful tour of British cities and giving a series of farewell performances in London, she came to America—making her first appearance in this country on November 18, 1872, at Booth's Theatre, New York, as *Juliet*. Her subsequent American tours were made in 1874, 1876 and 1879, and they were prosperous, so that she not only achieved distinction on our stage, but accumulated a considerable fortune. The parts that she acted in America were *Juliet*, *Rosalind*, *Viola*, *Beatrice*, *Imogen* and *Isabella*, from Shakespeare; and *Amy Robsart*, *Julia*, *Pauline* and *Lady Teazle*, from other authors. She was on the stage about fifteen years. She had been wedded, about 1864, to Mr. Philip Henry Lee, the son of a clergyman resident at Stoke-Bruerne, Northamptonshire; but the marriage proved unfortunate, and in 1877 she obtained a divorce from her husband; nor did she again wed,—the affirmation, made some time later, of her marriage to Mr. Edward Compton, an English actor, proving untrue. She died sud-

denly, under peculiarly afflicting and melancholy circumstances, at Paris, on August 15, 1880, at about the age of thirty-three, and was buried in Brompton Cemetery, London, where a sculptured cross of white marble marks her grave.

The acting of Adelaide Neilson, remarkable for many excellent attributes, was exceptionally remarkable for the attribute of inspiration. Her performances were duly planned, and her rehearsals of them were conscientious; but at moments in the actual exposition of them her voice, countenance, and demeanor would undergo such changes, because of the surge of feeling, that her person became transfigured, and she was more like a spirit than a woman. That transfiguration was especially apparent in her performances of *Juliet*, *Viola*, *Imogen* and *Isabella*—performances in which, as to the irradiant magnetism of genius, she was then unrivalled. She never imitated anybody. There never was, in her acting, the slightest trace of artifice or affectation. She had no model. She was a young woman, and the characters that she represented were young women; for which reason she gave



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only such measure of attention to the art of make-up as was essential to denote distinctive personality and to augment the effect of illusion. She derived her ideals of character in part from study of the author's text and in part from intuitive apprehension of the author's meaning. She entered into the soul of the person to be represented, and, for the time, she was consistent in the maintenance of the assumed identity. It was my privilege to witness several times each of the ten impersonations already named that she gave while in America, and also, by chance, to see and observe her personally after each of those performances. She had no particle of that paltry vanity which causes some actors to pretend that they are so absorbed in their assumptions as not to be aware of anything in the actual world: in other words, she was not a humbug: but she had the soul of an artist and she was exceedingly sensitive. I remember that the only part in her repertory by which she was profoundly and long agitated was *Juliet*. From the effort involved in her acting of other characters her recovery seemed to be immediate; but after acting *Juliet* she was

reserved, formal, withdrawn into herself, and indisposed to speak. The subsidence of emotion in her nervous system was then very slow: an ominous consciousness of the tragedy latent in human life seemed to remain present to her mind.

No actress on our stage, within the last fifty years, has equalled the fidelity of Adelaide Neilson in manifesting the bewildering, exultant happiness of *Juliet*, or her passion, or her awestricken foreboding of impending fate. She embodied *Juliet* in every mood, aspect and condition, without either indelicacy, extravagance or excess, and always in the high spirit of a perfect poetic ideal. In that spirit of poetry her superlative excellence disclosed and maintained its superb beauty and its imperial control.

The faculty of writing poetry,—a faculty which, in her girlhood, she vainly tried to exercise,—she did not possess; but she possessed a poetic soul: she could *live* poetry, though she could not *write* it, and that is why her radiant presence in the balcony scene of “*Romeo and Juliet*” diffused a golden light of romance, and why her action in the potion scene of the same tragedy was thrilling

and pathetic, with a fire of imagination, a truth and depth of feeling, and an artistic amplitude and felicity of expression that could not be resisted and cannot be forgotten. That is the reason also why her impersonation of *Viola* was superlative, and, to borrow the poet Wordsworth's exquisite figure, "fair as a star, when only one is shining in the sky." Some things,—perhaps not many,—in the realm of dramatic art are perfect: that performance of *Viola* was one of them. Such tones have not again been heard as those in which that actress, while her face became rapt, rueful and strangely forlorn in its mournful loveliness, spoke *Viola's* pathetic parable to *Orsino*, with its closing cadence of smothered grief:

I am all the daughters of my father's house,
And all the brothers, too—and yet I know not.

There are, and always have been, handsome women; and handsome women have always exercised, and they continue to exercise, great influence in social, political, and national affairs; but it is seldom that a woman appears who is possessed of the mysterious, exceptional fascination

that the poet Byron designated "the *fatal* gift of beauty." Adelaide Neilson possessed that perilous, magical attribute, if ever woman did, and probably it was the remote cause of her sorrows and her early death. Her personal allurements, which was extraordinary, seemed to blind many persons to her spiritual quality and intellectual weight. I have heard her speak, with some resentment, of being misunderstood, and with contempt for the guileful flattery of men and the furtive insincerity of women. Her aspect and manner were attractive to all sorts of people, but she had a proficient faculty of concealing her indifferent views of them, while holding their favor unchecked. She was capable of friendship, but she saw and knew her own defects and the defects of others, and there were times when that clear perception caused her to recoil from all human beings and to withdraw herself into the sad solitude of her own mind. At other times she veiled every indication of serious emotion with exuberant merriment.

I have heard that her temper was impetuous: that may be true, for a lively temper is sometimes

associated with constitutional sweetness of disposition; and Adelaide Neilson could be patient, gentle, ingenuous, and sweet. She had thought much of death, and by inclination she was religious. I remember listening to her voice in a twilight hour, when she was playing an organ and softly singing an anthem, which I suppose she had learned at Stoke-Bruerne Church, a place of which she was fond; and in some experience of devotional services (chiefly in the cathedrals of England, where I have participated in the rites of worship), I have not heard anything more expressive of a devout spirit and a reverent mind. The actress was, in fact, a strange compound of contrasted attributes: at times as stately and frigid as an empress; at times as vivacious and volatile as a breeze of spring.

One of her amusing foibles was an ingrained respect for social rank in her own country. The mention of Lord Popinjay or Lady Soapbubble seemed to impress her with a kind of awe—attributable, no doubt, to the fact that she was a scion of the lower middle-class of English people. The caste system prevalent in England is one of

the most potential forces operant in that country, and blithe observers who suppose that soon, or readily, it will be destroyed are harboring a delusion. Older and wiser persons than that poor child of chance accept it with reverence.

Adelaide Neilson has been dead for about the period of one generation. If she were living, she would be an elderly woman; but she would remember that she gained her professional laurels at a time when Acting was the main thing considered on the stage; when the Theatre had not become, as it has become since her time, almost entirely a Shop, and before the public had inclined a receptive ear to Symbols and Fads. She acted, with little exception, great parts in great plays, and she acted some of them superbly and all of them well. My recollection of her, after many years, is tinged with wonder that a poor girl, obscurely reared, practically uneducated, almost friendless, severely tried by vicissitude of fortune, and lonely "among the thorns and dangers of this world," should have accomplished so much. Her natural powers, however, were remarkable, and she did not lack either sagacity or force

of will. Her perception of character was intuitive and keen, and it seldom erred. Her taste was fastidious, to the extreme limit of exorbitant exigence; yet she had been schooled in privation, and she could endure hardship, toil, and fatigue. Haste, in anything, was her special aversion; yet her professional life was one of agitation, turmoil, and almost incessant activity. The deficiencies of her education were extensive, but in some degree she had repaired them—partly by desultory reading and study, more by observation and thought. She was a careful reader of Shakespeare, and she had made herself acquainted with some of the more elaborate commentaries that have been written on his plays,—notably with the works of the German essayist, Dr. Herman Ulrici; but I was not surprised to discover that her knowledge of those erudite and respectable compositions had been of no practical service to her in her profession, for she acted *Juliet*, *Viola*, *Rosalind*, *Beatrice*, *Imogen*, and *Isabella* in a way and with a meaning of which Doctor Ulrici and the ponderous Gervinus never dreamed. She had

acquired a little Latin, a little music, and, in her later days, some facility in reading and speaking French. She was fond of the poetry of Tennyson, and within my hearing she spoke more frequently of him than of any other author. Her favorite novelist was Thackeray, and her judgment and taste, in that respect, were clear denotements of a healthful, superior mind. Such a mind she possessed; and if her life had been prolonged till she had attained to complete maturity, she might, and probably she would, have taken her rank, in the historical record, among the great actors, for she had those gifts of nature that are essential for the exercise and impartment of imagination and feeling.

Her person was slender and symmetrical, and it was so vital that her movements had the grace of the bird's wing or the breaking wave. Her face, notwithstanding irregularity in its features, had a dazzling brilliancy and variety of expression. Her eyes, dark brown, such as are usually called black, were large, sparkling, and peculiarly capable of expressing both tenderness and mirth. Her hair, originally of a chestnut color, had been

stained to the hue of gold. Her voice, in which there was a slight lisp, or sibilation,—perhaps the lingering trace of a Yorkshire accent,—was rich, copious, flexible, sympathetic, and sweet. In acting, while she completely merged herself in the character to be represented, and at times became impassioned to the extent of apparent ecstasy, she never dissipated illusion nor caused solicitude, because she could always command the resources and means of her artistic design. When the tears would well up in her eyes and slowly trickle down her cheeks, as they did, for example, in the course of her recital of Tennyson's "May Queen," there was no distortion of her features, no disfigurement of her beauty. The *effect* of Nature was present, but "the *art* that Nature makes" was in full supremacy over the impulses that Nature prompts. To a person thus endowed, lapse of time and increase of knowledge might have meant accession of wisdom and power. As it was, she perished in her bloom, while scarcely past the threshold of youth, and if she lives at all, in the history of her vocation, she will live as a broken shaft.

In the conduct of her career, although she sometimes erred through impulsive surrender to wayward caprice, Adelaide Neilson, almost from the first, was actuated by a clear, well-considered, well-formed, resolute purpose. She wished to be, and she was determined to be, the leading actress of the English stage in the plays of Shakespeare. That purpose she avowed in my presence, and she declared that no consideration should be permitted to thwart or impede the accomplishment of that design. Observation, in general, considered her character to be weak: at one time she was designated "a *photograph* actress." No greater mistake could have been made. Her character was, in some respects, exceptionally strong. The defect in her organization, and the consequent frailty of her plan, was that she possessed the wild imagination, the "fine frenzy" of genius, without, in herself and for herself, its crowning power of perfect intellectual control; and, furthermore, she was a woman of acute sensibility, apprehensive conscience, and tender heart. The experience of her early life and the tangle of circumstance through which she had been forced to

make her way remained in her memory, embittered her thoughts, and often subdued her with sorrow,—not seen except by eyes that could see beneath the bewildering mask of beauty and happiness that she habitually wore. As I looked at her I thought of the pathetic words of Mrs. Browning:

Go, weep for those whose hearts have bled,
What time their eyes were dry.

Exact estimate of the total value of an actor's achievement, based on exact description of it, appears to be impossible. It does not exist. The poet Poe declared that there is no thought that the human mind cannot express in words. That may be true, yet it is certain that no absolutely complete record is extant displaying, minutely and precisely, with detail, example and specification, *all* that any actor of the past actually did, and actually was, when on the stage. Glimpses can be obtained of the famous representative dramatic leaders at particular points and in vital passages of many of the parts that they played. Something is known of Burbage, Betterton, Garrick, Wilks, Kemble, Cooke, Ed-

mund Kean, Macready, Forrest, Booth, Mrs. Pritchard, Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Woffington, Mrs. Siddons, and many others in the shining lineage of histrionic renown. Such books as those of Colley Cibber, Tom Davies, John Genest and Doctor Doran are not only instructive to the studious mind, but suggestive to the sensitive imagination. With long musing over biographies, and with judicious consideration of their varied chronicles, anecdotes, depreciations and encomiums, the reader is enabled to form fanciful ideals that seem to be adequate and substantial images that seem to be true; yet after the reading of thousands of pages about the old players, dead and gone, the conclusion as to any one of them must, nevertheless, remain, in some degree, theoretical, from lack of particular, detailed, exact, and positive knowledge. The literary art has done much, but all art has its limit. In every great dramatic performance that ever was given there were hundreds of delicate touches and evanescent felicities that only a few observers even partially saw, and that no observer has fully recorded; for expression implicates many

expedients: stillness, as well as motion; the pause, as well as the onset; the glance; the steadfast gaze; the gesture, sometimes involuntary, and more significant for that reason; the distinction of bearing; the authority of repose; the ordered tumult of feeling; the inflection of voice; the changes of demeanor; the shading of a word; the choice of a reading; the smile; the sigh; the sob; the tear; the skill to listen, and to show the effect of listening; the art to speak; and, whether listening or speaking, the faculty to impersonate. Memory does not bear away the specific effects of every one of those expedients, but rather the aggregate effect of all of them; and, after much time has elapsed, recollection of that effect necessarily tends to concentrate itself upon a general impression, comprehensive rather than minute.

Remembrance of Adelaide Neilson, now for many years only a handful of dust, while it retains traits of her nature and felicities of her acting, cannot impart much more than the outline or vague image of a lovely person, who possessed the exceptional power of converting romantic and poetic ideals into actual human beings. The

service that she rendered to the stage and society, the service that made her remarkable while she was living and that makes her memorable now, was her supremely true and deeply affecting interpretation of some of the most beautiful conceptions of human character and conduct that poetic genius has ever evolved. Fortune, as the Latin poet long ago melodiously observed, is capricious,—sometimes giving the garland where least expected, and sometimes suddenly snatching it away. On the occasion of a professional visit to Birmingham, soon after the beginning of her career, the actress received four shillings as her share of the profits of her engagement. Four years later, by acting for six nights at that same theatre, she cleared four hundred pounds. Long afterward, relating that incident, she declared that she would rather act to a shilling and win the hearts of her audience, than obtain thousands of dollars and be coldly received.

She sailed from New York on July 28, 1880, and, after a brief stay in London, proceeded to Paris, on her way to the South of France. Her intention had been known to visit Nice. To all

outward appearance her sky was then cloudless, her pathway was strewn with roses, and Fate was leading her toward a happy home. Far otherwise proved the event. On a sweet and tranquil August morning she went for a drive in the Bois de Boulogne, where she was stricken with illness, and where, almost immediately, she died. There is, or some years ago there was, in a little room on the second floor of a cabaret, not far from the main entrance to that park, a slab of white marble, affixed to the wall, bearing the grim record that here died the famous English actress, Adelaide Neilson. On the cross above her grave in London these words are written: "Gifted and Beautiful—Resting."

That cemetery of Brompton in which her ashes repose is perhaps more eloquent than any other kindred spot of dramatic genius passed away. Scores of names that shine in the written records of the drama can there be read upon memorial stones. The pilgrim musing among those solemn monuments and in the stillness and gloom of that dreary solitude, when he recalls the many scenes of splendid life and of proud and joyous triumph

in which those creatures of fancy once lived and moved, is irresistibly admonished of the frailty of mortal achievement, the emptiness of mortal ambition, and the evanescence of mortal renown. Even so the present historian, musing over his memories of the gentle, lovely, friendly players whom he has known, the men and women, once so bright and strong, so noble and so beautiful, whose faces are darkened now, and whose voices are silent in this world forever, can but feel how imperfect are his tributes, how impossible it is to save, in words, the light of their eyes, the music of their tones, the glorious vitality with which they thrilled into being the finest creations of poetic genius, and made the actor's most supreme art coincident with the poet's most supreme thought. With one exception the actors whom he has here commemorated are dead and gone: Mercy no less than Justice should participate in judgment of human beings who have passed away: he has tried to write of them with admiration for their virtues, with tenderness for their defects, with reverence for their memory, and with an humble sense of his unworthiness to attempt a

labor so important and so solemn as the right estimation of those who can nevermore speak for themselves, and, therewithal, the analysis and celebration of some of the noblest types of genius that have illumined and adorned our age. He can only hope that his sincere endeavor has not been made altogether in vain.

XI.

STAGE CONDITIONS—PAST AND PRESENT.

CENSURE of the Stage has usually taken the form of censure of the Actor, and that censure has been supplied, in copious abundance, by many persons and in many ways. The story of the rise of the Actor to a position, first of respectability and then of honorable eminence, is a pathetic story of long contention against religious, political, and social hostility, involving poverty, ignominy, misery, and shame. That story,—not essential to be rehearsed,—is told in the records of the Church, in the legislation of States, both European and American, and in the memoirs of individual players,—men and women of the Theatre who, by force of character, charm of genius, and brilliancy of achievement, have stemmed a tide of rancorous opposition and

risen above the level of the commonplace. In the present epoch the Stage is a recognized profession,—as much so as the Press, the Pulpit, or the Bar,—yet, even now, its votaries endure social disabilities and a stigma of prejudice; while now, as always, the Actor is a theme of universal criticism. “Every man, every woman, and every child” (to borrow Dr. Johnson’s comprehensive phrase), however ill-informed as to other subjects, assumes absolute knowledge of acting, and does not, for an instant, hesitate to instruct the Actor, fulminating against him, equally for what is done in the Theatre and for what is left undone, and liberally furnishing precept for his government.

It is undeniable that the condition of the American Stage, at present, is unsatisfactory to persons who possess judgment, knowledge, and taste. Many theatres exist, in many cities, all over the land, but only a few of them are worthy of the serious attention of the better class of the community; meaning the educated, cultivated audience. The pendulum,—which is always swinging,—has swung backward. The character of

the Theatre has deteriorated, and there has been a corresponding deterioration in the character of its followers. This is not said in the spirit of the praiser of a time that is past. According to that observer the Stage, ever since it existed, has been in a state of decline. Thus, the old poet Ben Jonson, in 1611, five years before the death of Shakespeare, referred to the times then passing as "jig-given times": thus, Colley Cibber, writing in 1739, reminded his readers that there was a time when the Stage "subsisted upon its rational labors, and was not lowered to the taste of the common spectator": thus the disreputable but venomously expert Anthony Pasquin, writing about theatrical conditions in 1791, declared that "this is an age which blissfully receives dross for bullion and extravagance for truth": and thus, in 1845, James Rees, an American commentator, described the Stage as a wreck, overwhelmed with "gloom and eternal night." So it has been ever. To the *laudator temporis acti* the roses of yesterday are sweeter than the roses of to-day, the sunshine brighter, the breeze softer, and, altogether, the world a better world than it

is now or ever will be again. Each successive period in stage history has its veterans of a former period, who, strong in conviction that "all the good actors are dead," extol the vanished glories of "the palmy days."

That is a natural view of the subject for an old and weary observer to take; but it is not an entirely rational one. With the Stage, as with everything else, the tide rises and the tide falls. History shows that the movements of nations have been like the movements of the waves. There are thinkers, in this epoch, who believe that the great Republic of America is repeating, more or less exactly, the experience of the great Republic of Rome. It is certain that, in the development of the arts and the adjustment of them to society, there have been alternate periods of rise and fall. In some of those arts,—namely, sculpture, architecture, branches of painting, and English dramatic poetry,—the supreme height of achievement was reached long ago; and now, although the tide continues to rise and to fall, it never rises as high as it once did. The English dramatic poetry of the time of Elizabeth and

James I., which is the best dramatic poetry ever written, has never been equalled. There is also some reason to think that, in the Art of Acting, the tide reached its highest flood in the better days of Edwin Booth and Henry Irving, and that it will not again reach so high a mark. This, however, is not said in the spirit of the rueful veteran who can see no good in the present day. The immediate point is that the present day happens to be a day of theatrical decline. There has not been a time in the history of the American Stage when the Theatre received so much attention as it receives now, from the Public and the Press, and there has not been a time when the quality of its average presentments so little deserved the respect of intellect and judicious taste. That condition is due to many causes, but the Actor is not to blame for it; and it ought to be declared, with emphasis, that condemnation of the Actor for the defects of the contemporary Theatre is unjust.

What are the causes that have produced this deplorable effect? The major causes are the prevalence of Materialism, infecting all branches

of thought, and of Commercialism, infecting all branches of action. The public is not blameless, because public opinion and sentiment,—meaning the general condition and attitude of the public mind,—reacts upon those who address the public. The theatrical audience of this period is largely composed of vulgarians, who know nothing about art or literature and who care for nothing but the solace of their common tastes and animal appetites: on that point observation of the faces and manners of the multitude would satisfy any thoughtful observer: and, because the audience is largely of this character, the Theatre has become precisely what it might have been expected to become when dependent on such patronage. It has passed from the hands that ought to control it,—the hands either of Actors who love and honor their art or of men endowed with the temperament of the Actor and acquainted with his art and its needs,—and, almost entirely, it has fallen into the clutches of sordid, money-grubbing tradesmen, who have degraded it into a bazaar. Throughout the length and breadth of the United States specu-

lators have captured the industry that they call "the Amusement Business" and have made "a corner in Theatricals."

A "department store" administration of the Theatre, dispensing dramatic performances precisely as venders dispense vegetables, must, necessarily, vulgarize the vocation of the Actor, dispelling its glamour of romance and making it mechanical and common. In the old theatrical days the Actor, no doubt, sometimes had reason to feel that, more or less, he was "tolerated" by "the gentry"; but that posture of folly he could despise. In the new theatrical day he knows that his art is peddled and, in the knowledge that he is treated as a commodity, there is a sense of humiliation that breeds indifference. Some of the acting now visible is, for that reason, about as interesting as the sawing of wood. The minor miseries of the Actor's lot are, likewise, to be taken into account. Those were always numerous; they were always impediments to good acting, and they continue to be so; nor does the public make any allowance for them. The boast of the contemporary manager is the opulent total

of his receipts. His favorite announcement declares that "Money talks." So it does: but, generally, it talks of avarice, sometimes of rapacious tyranny, nearly always of parsimony. Much money is expended on the front of the house and on productions of plays, but very little is spent for the comfort of the Actor or in order to provide for him the facilities that would save his strength, simplify his labors, and greatly expedite him in the accomplishment of his professional effects. There is scarcely a theatre in the United States that contains a sufficient number of dressing rooms to accommodate a reasonably numerous theatrical company. Each performer should have a separate dressing room: that is a matter of imperative necessity as well as of decency: yet, in many of the theatres, two, three, or four persons, usually nervous and sometimes uncongenial, must occupy one small room, and in that room must prepare themselves for a performance,—under circumstances that make the essential composure impossible. Furthermore, few dressing rooms are properly furnished, and there is no theatre in the country in which

the dressing rooms are equipped, as they should be, with a complete set of lights of various colors, such as are used on the stage. Persons who frequently attend the theatre must have noticed the horrible facial aspect of many performers during scenes that are played in "moonlight." That effect is resultant from a change of lights,—especially when greens and blues are turned on,—a change which affects the colors that have been used in making-up the face. If the Actor, having only a white or a yellow light in his dressing room, cannot make up his face so that the effect will, at least, approximate to Nature under all changes of color in the lighting of the stage, his appearance will be that of a hobgoblin; for his countenance will appear streaked with purple, white, and ghastly blue, resembling nothing that was ever seen on a human visage outside of a theatre.

In most of the theatres the Green Room has been abolished and so has the Call-Boy. The actor, now, must either remain in his dressing room and run the risk of being late for his entrance, or he must stand at the wings or wander

about the coulisses, waiting for his cue, and thus, by his superfluous presence and his movements, annoy his associates who are actually on the scene. Chairs would be obstructive in the coulisses, and few of them are allowed there, and therefore the waiting actor, if he would rest, must perch on a casual article of furniture, or a trunk, or a piece of scenery. The "stage-hands,"—that is to say, the scene-shifters, etc.,—under the arbitrary rule of the Trades Unions, practically own the stage. In the larger and more important theatres those myrmidons frequently will not obey the orders of the stage-manager or of a principal actor, who may happen to wish that something should be changed in the mechanical arrangement of a set, but will heed only the commands of the heads of special mechanical departments,—the stage-carpenter, the electrician, the property-man, etc. Richard Mansfield mentioned to me an illustrative instance of that impudent tyranny. A light-man, in the fly-gallery, had, several times, at rehearsal, misdirected his calcium-light, and the actor, at last, called to him, impatiently: "Here, here! not

over there—not on that side!” “My manager,” he said, “was standing beside me, and he whispered, ‘Don’t speak to him like that, or he’ll leave the theatre’; so I took off my hat, held it across my bosom, bowed, and humbly added, ‘If you do not object.’” In the course of a performance of *Leah Kleschna*, by Mrs. Fiske, I happened to be on the stage during the pivotal scene in the second act,—that of the attempted robbery,—and, at its crisis, one of the stage-hands, leaning from his perch on a property-box, in order to expectorate on the floor, knocked over three or four long stage-braces that were beside him, making a resounding racket, and spoiling the dramatic situation,—to him of no consequence. One of the chief nuisances of the theatre is the conduct of those “sons of Martha”—so touchingly celebrated by the melodious Mr. Kipling.

The conduct of the theatrical audience is often as unseemly in character and as disastrous in effect as that of the insolent artisans. Indeed, almost as a custom, the theatrical audience is either inconsiderate of the actor or contemptuous

of him—for, as a rule, its sole quest is “amusement,” and its primary thought is of itself and not of those who minister to its mental welfare. Actors,—if, indeed, they be actors, and not clods,—are persons of extremely sensitive nervous organization, a fact that the audience seldom or never considers; and yet that fact is something which, for its own good, an audience ought especially to remember; since the audience is a part of all that is done and said in a theatre, and since the only approximately perfect dramatic representation ever feasible is that which is accomplished when actors and auditors are in complete sympathy and accordance, all contributing to one desired and enjoyed result. No actor can do justice to his part, himself, or his audience when his attention is distracted, his temper ruffled, and his sensibility wounded by incivility: by the swish, swish, swish of whispering, indifferent spectators; the slamming of seats; the creaking of doors; the ostentatious parade and noisy bustle of fashionable females, arriving late and divesting themselves of their evening wraps, as they throng into the boxes and

indolently and often superciliously place themselves on exhibition. It is easy to understand what would happen to the music if a by-stander were to seize the conductor's arm, in the middle of an orchestral performance: yet the Actor, a far more sensitive and tremulous instrument than the violin, is subjected to precisely that kind of treatment.

But a more distressful affliction that the Actor has to endure, under the style of theatrical administration now prevalent, is arbitrary interference with his acting, the restriction of his initiative, the repression of his intelligence, and the distortion of his art, by jacks in office. Indeed, the best of contemporary stage managers, as a custom, interfere too much with actors, and are far too lavish with what they call "instruction." In an earlier period of stage history the office of stage manager was esteemed one of great importance, and it was customarily allotted to an *actor* of competent ability and large experience,—such an actor, for example, as William T. Lewis, in England, or Thomas Barry, in America. Those persons were masters of every detail of their pro-

fession, and also they were gentlemen. William T. Lewis was, for many years, stage manager at Drury Lane, and it is recorded that, even when he had to convey displeasure, there was a kindness and pleasantry in his manner that deprived censure of all offence. In our time the direction of the stage is commonly assumed, not by old, competent, experienced actors, but by some pop-injay who calls himself a "producer" and whose whole stock in trade consists of an owlish assumption of wisdom, a mischievous celerity in interposing frivolous objections, and an exasperating demeanor of peacock authority. One of the favorite methods of that charlatan is to watch the old actors, at rehearsal, as they work up a scene with "business," of which he, "the producer," is absolutely ignorant, until, just before they reach a climax, and he is able to discern the coming effect, he can suddenly interrupt them, and instruct them to do precisely what it has become evident that they intended to do: in that way he often contrives to gain credit with his employer,—the speculator who "runs" the theatre for "what there is in it for me," and who is

more ignorant than himself of all that relates to acting. The usual "producer" is a fungus of modern growth,—a prig, who crams himself by consulting a cyclopedia, and who thrives by hood-winking some confiding female star, or some one of the many fat-witted tradesmen now, for the most part, possessors of the American Theatre.

This theme involves the whole system of Expression, as it is commonly called, and, of course, there are widely diversified views upon it. For example, one of the ablest and most successful of contemporary dramatists, a leader who, whether as dramatist or stage director, has accomplished much and gained valuable distinction, avers, in substance, that "acting is not an exact science"; that "we cannot say, in acting, 'two and two make four'"; that when he, the manager, finds an actor whom he deems suitable to act a certain part, he knows that he *is* suitable, but he cannot say *why* he knows it; that, having engaged an actor, he talks to him in a manner "to instruct and interest him"; that, on the one hand, it is sometimes necessary to say to an

actor: "You walk across the stage like a hog going to a snail's funeral"; while, on the other hand, the necessity sometimes occurs to "talk to a sensitive, half-hysterical girl as a lover talks to the woman he is wooing"; that "the definite thing, in acting, is the *heart*, the capacity to feel"; that, in an actor, "intelligence is desirable but secondary"; that "the merely brainy (sic) actor is never a great actor"; and that "the heart is greater than the brain."

Such statements, coming from an authoritative source, are astounding. If acting is not an *exact* science, or an *exact art*, what is it? The first essential of a dramatic performance is foreknowledge—purpose—plan. Nothing, not even the slightest detail, can safely be left unconsidered. A sudden inspiration may come to an actor, and, if he is able to make use of it, to help and not to hurt his design, so much the better; but inspiration can neither be presumed nor implicitly trusted. The basis of acting, whether great or little, is study, thought, design. No actor was ever successful who did not know before-hand exactly what he meant to do, ex-

actly why he meant to do it, exactly when he meant to do it, exactly how he meant to do it, and who, above all, was not possessed of the ability to make practical use of that knowledge. John Philip Kemble, according to the best historical testimony, was one of the greatest actors that have ever lived, but he was the most scientific of artists. "In the preparation of his effects," says his thoughtful and precise biographer, Boaden, "he left nothing whatever to chance." There is no art more exact than the art of acting. Three impersonations, not yet faded from the public remembrance, can be cited in proof—*Richelieu*, by Edwin Booth; *Rip Van Winkle*, by Joseph Jefferson; and *Mathias*, by Henry Irving. Those men were, undeniably, great actors. Each of them had a distinct, characteristic method: but, in one attribute, their methods were identical,—namely, the attribute of definite design. There was not a tone, a glance, a gesture, a detail of any kind, in either of those performances, that had not been pre-ordained. The assumption might vary a little, on different occasions, but that was only because no man can,

at all times, retain inflexible control of himself. There was never an intended variation.

No person, even though possessed of a feminine temperament and feminine intuition, can *know* that another person is suitable or unsuitable to act, if he does not know *why* he knows it. There is a reason, somewhere, for everything, and, as a rule, it is not darkly hidden. The manner in which "a hog" walks when "going to a snail's funeral" must be left to the imagination; but it would seem, to the uninitiated observer, that a man who under any circumstances, whether funereal or festive, walks like a hog, should not be employed as an actor. Also it would seem sensible that a stage manager, on finding one of the female performers to be "a sensitive, half-hysterical girl," should either send her to her home or call a doctor, and anyway, should then employ an actress, rather than address the sufferer "as a lover talks to the woman he is wooing." Valerian or ammonia, in such cases, is more salutary than sentiment.

Capability of feeling is, of course, essential to an actor: that must be taken for granted: and,

meanwhile, talk about the "heart" always has a plausible sound: but there could not be a more erroneous doctrine than is implied in the notion that the heart is the main thing, in acting, and more important than the head. The "definite thing" in acting is *the faculty to act*,—a faculty which includes imagination, comprehension of human nature, command of all the means of expression, skill to *impersonate*, and power to move an audience through the feelings and the mind. It is immaterial whether, while giving the performance, an actor feels or does not feel,—so long as he makes his audience feel: and the testimony of the greatest of actors explicitly declares, as the lesson of experience, that you cannot make your audience feel unless you hold your own feelings in perfect control. Ungoverned emotion impairs expression, disappoints design, and destroys effect. The actor may riot in sensibility, if such be his temperament, but the brain must remain imperial and supreme over all his emotions. It is recorded of Garrick that when he was acting King Lear, and his auditors were convulsed with a passion of tears, he would walk up the stage

and speak, aside, to the Fool,—saying, with a chuckle, “This is stage feeling.” That charming actress of Long Ago, Mrs. Anna Cora Mowatt, has recorded, in her Autobiography, that once, at Liverpool, when she was acting Mrs. Haller,—Mr. Morehouse being the Stranger,—as they reached the climax of the most pathetic scene in that domestic drama of love and sorrow, the afflicted Stranger, observing the audience to be dissolved in tears, softly whispered to her: “They are sending ’round umbrellas in the pit.” That actor could feel, and could make others feel. Command of feeling does not imply lack of feeling: it only denotes mastery of art; and the stage-director who does not remember that elemental truth is strangely forgetful. The actor would not live long,—and meanwhile would have no control over his audience,—who, night after night, should allow himself to be convulsed and shattered by the literal, actual realization, in his own person, of the terrible emotions of Othello or Lear. The heart is by no means greater than the head. The effect in acting must be produced by the operation of the brain, working, through

the imagination, and maintaining absolute supremacy over the feelings and over all the instruments of expression.

There is no such being in existence as "a merely brainy actor." Persons of cold, abstract intellect,—the Herbert Spencer order of men,—do not seek the stage: but "intelligence" often does, and it is never "secondary." The most intellectual actor of whom there is record was the late Henry Irving; but, while he was a man of extraordinary mind, he was also a man of deep heart. Mediocrity, rebuked by his greatness, while resentfully conscious of his intellectual force, would deny to him the possession of feeling: but the fact is that his emotion was prodigious:—only, it was perfectly controlled. When he acted *Charles I.* or *Dr. Primrose*, he held his auditors in breathless suspense, and often they were weeping, all over the theatre: and the cause of that effect was that his "intelligence" was first, not "secondary"; that the great actor knew how to use his feeling, and was not himself subdued and disabled by it.

The competent stage-manager will prescribe

the general "business" of the play; will courteously maintain a rightful discipline in the dramatic company; will see that the scenery and dresses are correct; and will carry through a dramatic representation in accordance with a prescribed plan. The most essential service that such a functionary can do,—while striving to make the actors harmonious, and if possible happy, in their stage relations and in the fulfilment of their duties,—is to watch the performance from the front; to note its virtues as well as its defects; and, while he suggests rectification of the faults, to cheer his company by intelligent recognition of the merits. The actor is always better for sensible, sincere encouragement; and it ought practically to be remembered that he should be allowed to express his own ideal of a part,—unless that ideal be manifestly and demonstrably wrong,—and should not be constrained to fetter and stultify himself by striving to embody the ideal formed by another mind and arbitrarily thrust upon him. Suggestion may prove useful to an actor, but no person can be taught to act. The executive dramatic faculty is born, not made. In former times,

while the stage-manager maintained the requisite discipline of the stage, the Actor was not only allowed but expected to use his mind, and to play his part according to his own ideal of what it ought to be. After the Star System had been established it became customary for the star to express his wishes as to "stage business" and for the auxiliary actors to "support" him according to his desire. Some of the stars, such as the elder Booth, were often indifferent as to the proceedings of associate players. An old friend of mine, Clifton W. Tayleure, long since dead, told me that, in his youth, he once had to play a little part with the elder Booth, in "Richard III," and that, having entered on the wrong side of the scene, he presently went to the great actor and humbly apologized for his blunder; to which, he said, Booth kindly answered: "Young man, it makes no difference to me: only come on: *I'll find you.*" Other actors, like Macready and Barry Sullivan, were arrogant, dictatorial, and harshly exacting: others, like Joseph Jefferson, Edwin Booth, Lester Wallack, and John McCullough, were courteous and considerate. Later there came a

time when either the indolence of the star or the ignorance of the speculative manager opened a lucrative way for the incubus of the "producer," and that superfluity has become grafted on the stage.

A radical error in the stage-management of the late Augustin Daly (who was a superb stage-director), arose from his propensity to insist that every part should be acted in strict accordance with his personal view of it. "If my actors will only do exactly what I tell them to do," he once said to me, "I will never complain of them." It often happened that his views were correct, that his suggestions were excellent, and that his actors could not have taken a wiser course than the one he prescribed: but the iron-clad application of his rule,—or of any man's rule,—would inevitably efface individuality in an actor and convert him into a machine. There is a more or less prevalent notion that acting consists in obliteration of the actor, by means of consummate disguise. That notion is erroneous. A personation of Hamlet by Edwin Booth should possess the spir-

ital quality of Edwin Booth, not that of Stiggins; just as a painting by Murillo should possess the spiritual quality of Murillo, not that of Dauber. The assumption of character is not the effacement of an actor. The secret of success,—if there be a secret,—is style.

Acting is an art, not a business. That is the crux of the present condition of the American Theatre. For the tradesmen who now practically control it (allowance being gratefully made for an occasional exception), success is determined and measured solely and exclusively by the standard of the box-office: in a word, by Money. Those persons do not and can not understand that any human being, unless bereft of his senses, would even dream of sacrificing the possibility of financial profit for the sake of sustaining and promoting one of the fine arts. They do not even comprehend the fact that, under judicious management, financial profit, sufficient to satisfy reasonable expectation and moderate desire, is entirely compatible with an artistic administration of the theatre, such as would insure the one desirable result,—good plays well acted.

In the history of the English Stage there is a record of hardship and loss; but there is also a record of prosperity and gain. Garrick and Kemble made fortunes in England; Booth and Jefferson made fortunes in America; and all of them practically respected their profession and did nothing base. The same line of conduct is practicable now, and there is no reason to doubt that it would, in time, meet with recognition and recompense;—for human nature remains unchanged, and the appeal to its finer sense cannot ever be made entirely in vain.

Such a line of conduct, however, is not to be expected in a mercenary period. The stage has “fallen on evil days.” The pendulum may swing forward again, by and by, and the tide may rise again, but no indications are now visible that a change for the better is near at hand. Every denotement, on the contrary, is indicative of the decline of romance and the growth of vulgarity and greed. Combinations have been made, to control all the theatres of the country, according to the policy of the close corporation. The number of regular Theatres will be reduced. The

number of Music Halls will be augmented—and the Music Hall is the deadly foe of the Theatre. The race of trained, accomplished, competent actors, rapidly dwindling, will soon have passed away, and no new actors, of equal qualification, are rising to fill the void. E. S. Willard, Robert B. Mantell, John Hare, N. C. Goodwin, Edward Terry, William H. Crane, Charles Wyndham, Louis James, Charles B. Hanford, Ada Rehan, Ellen Terry, Minnie Maddern Fiske, and a few others, survivors of a better time, may, perhaps, for a little while, keep alive the memory of the finer traditions of acting: but it will be only for a little while. The Stage, already “orientalized,” will, more and more, be devoted to ornate spectacle, “crank” experiment, and all forms of fad and folly that the ingenuity of the “amusement” manager can invent. “I keep a Department Store,” says one janitor. “The Dollar Sign is the sign of Success,” says another. “Give the Pee-pul what they want,” vociferates the chorus of button-making speculators, all over the land: and the obvious “want” of the Pee-pul, considering what they accept, in all our great cities, would seem

to be Trash. Such are the conditions that environ the American Actor.

To say this is to incur the obloquy of being "a back-number," "a reactionary," and "a worshipper of the Past." So be it. There are observers of the acted drama, who, having lived in "the Past" and discerned its merits and its defects, know something about it; but they also live in "the Present," they continue to discern developments and events, and they perceive that, in many ways, the theatre is, and for some time has been, on the decline of a wave in its progress. That perception and the assertion of it do not, however, involve either a preachment of hopeless decadence or a narrow view of "Present" achievement. Nothing seems to give such acute pain and annoyance to the enthusiasts of the "Present" as any favorable reference to accomplishment in "the Past." That resentment, perhaps, is natural: the meddler who would disturb the sacred right to individual ignorance should always be assailed: but it is neither just nor wise. Disparagement of "the Past" with a view to glorification of "the Present" is as

wrong as the converse process, and it is more injurious.

The art of acting is immortal, but its influence at this time, is considerably restricted because of sordid commercialism on the part of those who chiefly control it. No art can long exert an influence for good when, primarily and chiefly, it is harnessed to the freight train and used for the mere sake of monetary gain. That danger threatens the theatre of the Present more than it ever threatened the theatre of the Past. The control of acting has largely passed from the professors of the art and into the hands of commercial speculators, who boast that they conduct the Theatre as "a department store," "operate for money," and must therefore "cater" to all tastes. The worst tastes are ever the easiest to please. The instinct of evil and the wish to view its manifestations are general in the human race. Desire for physical enjoyment and dislike for the effort of thought are almost universal. Commercialism follows the line of least resistance; that is, instead of addressing *all* tastes, it addresses the lowest. The marvellous ease of transporta-

tion from place to place greatly facilitates money grubbing. Much money can be gathered by the vulgar, itinerant showman. The constant craving for novelty, so characteristic of our nation, has tended to increase the number of theatres, and at the same time to obliterate the old stock-company system,—the loss of which was the greatest injury that the theatre of the Present has suffered; for, in the old stock-company days, actors were compelled to learn their art and to prove their ability before they were intrusted with theatrical responsibilities.

To-day the theatrical janitor must have "shows" in order to keep his "house" open. The men who dominate the theatrical field, in order that they may maintain their dominance of it, *must* have actors, and, as there is no other way in which to get them, they are "made to order." As soon as a performer shows talent that might ripen into something fine he is "starred" and, as a rule, his development is permanently checked by that process. From that cause the stage is afflicted with a continually increasing army of performers who obtain publicity merely because

of youth, animation, a little personal beauty, and an unlimited use of the lithograph and the twenty-sheet poster. Among persons who chiefly control our Theatre to-day there is scarcely one who is competent to judge of the merits of a play by reading it, or one who can rehearse a company, or can help actors in the development of their faculties. There are many, however, who believe themselves to be marvelous in their ability to do all those things. Most of them, it is known, are comparatively ignorant of theatrical history and of dramatic literature. More than one of them has avowed that he "keeps a shop," and cares nothing about the Theatre or the public, so long as he gains money. The late Joseph Jefferson (who had unusual opportunities to see and know), told the present writer that the method of one of the most conspicuous managers in the theatre of to-day (a person who violently objects to even the slightest expression of critical judgment), is to assume the direction of a rehearsal, and then to address the company, saying: "Come, now! Hurry up; this don't run smooth; more ginger! more ginger! don't wait for cues!": and

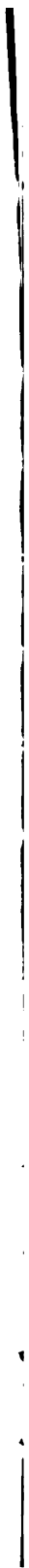
the venerable actor added, "I should like to see him rehearsing 'Hamlet'!"

To-day it is difficult for a young actor to obtain suitable training. The number of thoroughly trained and matured actors, capable of instructing the younger devotees of the stage, grows continuously less. The standard of individual talent, when talent happens to exist, is not lower to-day than it was in the Past; the standard of individual general education is, possibly, higher; but the standard of professional proficiency is lamentably low. Many young men and women who have no right to be upon the stage get there by means of "schools of acting," institutions, which, practically, are worthless, as to what they teach about acting,—for the only good school of acting is the Theatre. Those "schools of acting" graduate persons who, by accepting almost any salary (as they frequently do, in order to obtain access to the regular theatre), drive out old, experienced performers. There were indifferent or bad performances and productions in the Past, ever since the theatre had a Past, and nobody knows that better than the

unfortunate beings whose lives have been spent largely in the theatre; but it is idle to say, as it has been said, that the stars of old shone because of the inferiority of their associates. The diamond is always the diamond. It looks well when embedded in clay; it certainly looks far better when it is set in gold. There never was a time when all the actors were diamonds; but the diamonds of old were generally set in gems. The zealots of the Present have some things over which they do well to rejoice. There are actors now,—few in number, but fine in talent,—whom it is a delight to honor, and who have no reason to complain of lack of appreciation: actors by whom, if their powers could be combined, the vocation of acting and the administration of the Theatre might be rescued from the rapacious hands of Trade; but the dramatic blessings of the age are not numerous, and, with a view to their instruction and the improvement of the time in which they live, its worshippers might advantageously inquire whether such conditions as now prevail would have been possible when the theatre, instead of being, as it now is, under the con-

trol of a sordid, crafty monopoly, was dominated by such figures as Edwin Forrest, Edwin Booth, John Gilbert, James E. Murdoch, Lawrence Barrett, John McCullough, Lester Wallack, Thomas Barry, Augustin Daly, E. L. Davenport, John E. Owens, William Warren, Edwin Adams, William Florence, and Joseph Jefferson. Let us be just to the Present, but not unjust to the Past.

NOTES



NOTES

MRS. MARSHALL.

Mrs. Marshall appears to have been charming as a representative of piquant romps and roguish boys,—her performance of Edward, in Mrs. Inchbald's comedy of "Every One Has His Fault," being, in particular, designated as perfect. Washington's admiration of Mrs. Marshall's acting is noted in the chronicle of the early American Stage. She was born in England. Her maiden name was Webb. She contracted a second marriage, and continued and closed her career as Mrs. Wilmot. Another player whom Washington liked was Thomas Wignell,—who died in 1803, aged 50. The play of "The Poor Soldier," mentioned on page 15, is a musical farce or comic opera, by John O'Keefe, 1747-1833, originally, 1763, called "The Shamrock," but subsequently elaborated, improved, and re-named by the author.

EDWIN FORREST.

At the time of his decease I wrote a **SHORT LIFE OF EDWIN FORREST**, which as published fills thirty-three pages in the second volume of my **SHADOWS OF THE STAGE**. It was founded partly on personal observation and knowledge, and partly on information derived from his widow, from such friends of his, and of mine, as John McCullough, Edwin Adams, and James Oakes, and it contains the truth about him—for which reason it has elicited much censure. The devotees of Forrest, while he was living, were never satisfied with anything less than idolatry, and worshippers of his memory are still quick to resent even the slightest departure from unstinted eulogy.

It was my privilege to see Forrest in every important part that he acted, after he became distinguished in his profession, and to study his acting and frequently to write about it, in the press. No untrue or unjust word concerning that

actor was ever said or written by me, and I take this opportunity of recording a protest against being ranked among his detractors.

Forrest's own view of himself was expressed to his biographer, Alger, in these words: "My faults are many and I deserve much blame. Yet, after every confession and every regret, I feel, before God, that I have been a man more sinned against than sinning; and, if the whole truth be told, I am perfectly willing to bear all the censure, all the condemnation, that justly belongs to me."

William Warland Clapp, 1826-1891, the historian of the Boston Stage,—a man of large and varied theatrical information, of eminently sober judgment and of exemplary probity,—writing to me, from Boston, September 27, 1881, referred to the tragedian in these words (the italics are his):

"I knew Forrest: in fact I knew two Forrests—one a gentleman, when he was pleased to be, the other a brute. It was impossible to reconcile the phases of the one man."

When first published, in a magazine, my account of Forrest, in the chapter now called "A Royal Line," incorrectly stated that his sepulchre

was at the Forrest Home. Much had been said about the removal of his remains from St. Paul's churchyard to that place, and the impression was in my mind that the removal had been effected. The mistake was observed by several persons, and I was duly apprised of it, with the asperity usual in such cases. My dear and honored friend, the late Albert Henry Smyth, was then resident in Philadelphia, and, on consulting him, I received the following interesting answer:

"I had read your magazine article with much interest, and I had noticed that you were in error with regard to the place of burial of Edwin Forrest. He was buried in St. Paul's churchyard, in South Third street, and, although the removal of the remains has often been proposed, they still repose there, almost on the pavement of the street. For a truly titanic error of this kind let me refer you to Morse Stephens's great history of the French Revolution, where he describes Franklin's grave *in Paris*."

The removal of the remains of Forrest had indeed been contemplated for a very long time. The following paragraph appeared in the New York "Tribune," April 24, 1891:

"The remains of Edwin Forrest, the tragedian, will soon be removed from the old vault in St. Paul's churchyard, Philadelphia, where they now rest, to the Forrest Home, at

Holmesburg. The inscription on the Forrest vault is as follows:

William Forrest. Born 1758. Died 1819.

Rebecca Forrest. Born 1763. Died 1844.

Also the Children of William and Rebecca Forrest.

Lorman Forrest. Born 1796. Died in South America.

William Forrest. Born 1800. Died 1834.

Henrietta Forrest. Born 1798. Died 1863.

Caroline Forrest. Born 1802. Died 1869.

Eleanora Forrest. Born 1808. Died 1871.

Edwin Forrest. Born March 9, 1806. Died December 12, 1872."

SOTHERN AND SPIRITUALISM.

The subjoined letter, apparently intimating belief in spiritualism, seems worthy of preservation because of its record of more or less comical incidents in the experience of an inveterate practical joker:

"1 Fulton Street, Glens Falls, N. Y.,

February 2, 1907.

"Dear Mr. Winter: I have just read, in 'The Saturday Evening Post,' your article on Sothern. There is an incident it recalls that I would relate to you.

"My father, Judge John W. Edmonds, was invited, with several other prominent men, to attend Sothern's so-called 'Miracle Circle.' I was then quite a young woman, and was allowed to go there with my father. I sat apart and looked on, eagerly and closely, at the 'performance,' and was convinced that the sincere, earnest guests were being tricked. I induced my father to invite Sothern and his confederate, Isherwood, to come to our house and have a 'seance.' After a little hesitation they consented.

"On the evening appointed I had a table and all in readiness. It was a warm summer evening. Sothern came, arrayed in immaculate white. They 'sat' for some time; nothing occurred. Finally Sothern went suddenly into a fit and rolled on the floor and frothed at the mouth. I had been watching and drew my own conclusions. I at

once threw over him a *large* pitcher of cold water. He jumped up at once, grabbed his hat and ran down Fifth avenue, soaking wet! and Isherwood after him. We heard no more of him until later.

"One day I was in Taylor's restaurant, with my fastidious sister. At the far end of the room sat Sothern. The place was full. Sothern caught sight of me, came down the aisle, with his Dundreary style and step, and rushed up to me and clasped me in his arms for a moment,—gave me a look, as much as to say 'I'm even with you now,' and sauntered back to his seat. Every one was on the grin, except my sister, and I had to explain the matter, for, as I was a motherless girl, she felt a care over me and wondered at the episode.

"When Sothern declared, in England, that all was a trick, quite contrary to his assertions here, my father lost no time in writing to his friends in England about it. . . .

"Sothern was of service in the above episode, by putting such men as my father and my husband (known as 'Edmund Kirke'), on their guard, in their *sincere* search for truth and consolation.

Yours truly,

LAURA EDMONDS GILMORE.

"The foaming at the mouth was produced by a bit of soap, I found."

HENRY IRVING AND LAWRENCE BARRETT.

From the Detroit Free Press, February 27, 1907.

A WORD IN SEASON.

"In a recent issue of 'The Saturday Evening Post,' Mr. William Winter appears as the writer of a memoir of Lawrence Barrett. In it passing mention is made of the cloud that obscured the friendship between Barrett and Henry Irving. The latter appealed to Mr. Winter for an explanation of the attitude of the American tragedian, saying: 'I find him changed, and I should be glad if you could tell me why.' To this Mr. Winter replied; 'That is easily done. After he had played a losing engagement at your London theatre, presenting "Richelieu," you marked your next season with a production of the same play, and he took the fancy that you meant to suggest an invidious contrast between his failure and your success.'

"Mr. Winter does not appear to have been apprised of the essential facts relating to the Barrett-Irving estrangement. When the English actor first visited America, in the season of 1883-'84, Mr. Barrett exerted himself to the utmost to make his introduction to the American public memorable. At much inconvenience and very considerable pecuniary sacrifice, the hospitable Barrett made manifest his 'love and friending' for the stranger. He was then handsomely housed on the northeast corner of Fifth avenue

and Twenty-eighth street, and the night before Irving's arrival he gave a dinner for a party of friends who were to go down the bay to board the *Britannic* for the purpose of giving the voyager an early welcome.

“ ‘The meeting between Irving and Barrett on the gang-plank,’ Mr. Winter writes, ‘where they stood for a little while bareheaded and with clasped hands, lives in my memory as a spectacle of peculiar and touching beauty. Men more intellectual have never graced the stage. They were of the same age and of kindred temperament; pale, ascetic, dignified, with dark, piercing eyes, thoughtful faces and hair just touched with silver. We sailed back to the city and escorted Irving to the Brevoort House, the first building he ever entered in New York. His prodigious triumph on the American stage is a theme of history. It was the hand of Lawrence Barrett that gave him the first welcome.’

“ ‘Now note the contrast between this conduct of Barrett's and what followed when he went into the country of Irving on a like mission. All Barrett's friends knew of his consuming ambition to succeed on the London stage. It was a legitimate and commendable ambition. He knew theatrical biography from the bottom up, and there was alive in his soul a noble impulse to tread the boards where the great of his profession had trodden, and to identify his name with the history of the theatre in the world's capital. He gathered all the money he could command and set out on his quest of the Golden Fleece with high hope. Did Irving take the trouble to go out to sea or anywhere else to meet him? Not he! Barrett quietly made his way into London and began preparing for the most momentous event of his life—a London appearance on the stage of his

dear friend Henry Irving's own theatre. A day and a night passed, and still no Irving. A week passed, and Barrett had not seen the shadow or the substance of the friend in whose interest he had metaphorically broken his neck. Ten days passed; and at the close of the tenth day Irving paid the American a perfunctory call in his (Irving's) own theatre. Meanwhile Barrett had fretted, mourned, chafed, and many times wondered aloud what could have occurred to keep him and his friend apart. When he had finally come and gone, Barrett resumed his wonted buoyancy. 'Henry has been to see me!' he exclaimed, in boyish and, in the circumstances, pathetic, delight; and all through his disastrous engagement the memory of that call seemed to be his one gleam of joy. He was a heavy loser by the venture, and he came home more depressed than he had been at any other time since the squalid beginning of his public career.

"Nor was this personal neglect all that Barrett had to complain of. He had asked Irving to advise him, as a friend, what play to open his London engagement with. He himself was decidedly favorable to 'Francesca da Rimini.' It had not been done in London; it was one of the finest of the recent Barrett productions, which were known for their opulence and splendid general appeal; and it was miles and miles away from anything that would suggest to the Irving partisans comparison unfavorable to Barrett. But no, 'Richelieu,' said Irving. 'Richelieu' it was, which, of course, was fatal to the American hope.

"Barrett came home bankrupt. Indeed, so low was the ebb of his fortunes that a check for \$50 given by him on the bank where he had done business on a large scale for many years was returned dishonored to the payee. It ought

to be said that when this fact was made known to Barrett he took up the check. His public rallied to his support, and he soon mended his broken pecuniary standing. Later he organized the Booth-Barrett campaign, the first season of which yielded a net revenue of \$600,000. Of this incredible sum, Edwin Booth took 50 per cent, Mr. Barrett 40 per cent and Arthur Chase 10 per cent. When Barrett was in the doldrums Chase had come to his rescue with a timely loan. He was admitted to the Booth-Barrett fold on a 10 per cent basis, ostensibly for his services in providing an advantageous route; but the real explanation of it was Barrett's desire to pay a debt of gratitude. Thus Chase earned (sic) \$60,000 in about thirty-five or forty weeks, because he had once been accommodating to a man who could appreciate the spirit that prompted a friendly and helpful action.

"All this is history. It is 'inside' history, and, of course, little known; but it is a part of the record of eminent men, and it is time for the types to undertake its preservation.

G. P. G."

The writer of the article above quoted, Mr. George P. Goodale, is one of the oldest and most experienced and judicious writers about the stage who are connected with the press in America, and he has ever been a conscientious journalist and critic. For that reason, among

others, the statements above made by him are entitled to particular notice. A decisive reason, furthermore, for refuting them is apparent in the fact that, having had a wide circulation, they have assisted to fortify that spirit of detraction which always attends the pathway of honor and noble achievement. No doubt they were conscientiously made: Mr. Goodale is incapable of malice or unkindness; but conscientious misrepresentation, when accepted as truth, is not less harmful than the disparagement that envy incites and malevolence disseminates.

Mr. Goodale was one of Lawrence Barrett's esteemed friends, and to some extent, undoubtedly, acquainted with the history of Lawrence Barrett's career; but, as to the relations that existed between Lawrence Barrett and Henry Irving, and as to "the essential facts" in the matter of their estrangement, his article furnishes conclusive proof that he does not know anything.

Henry Irving, making his first visit to America, sailed from Liverpool on October 11, 1883; arrived in New York on October 21; filled an engagement in this city, at the Star Theatre, be-

ginning on October 29 and ending on November 24; made a tour of other cities of our country, lasting about four months; gave a farewell performance in New York City on April 26, 1884; sailed for England on May 2; arrived in Liverpool on May 8, and went up to London presumably on the same day.

Lawrence Barrett, making his second, and most important, professional visit to England, sailed from New York on March 19, 1884, at which time *Henry Irving was acting in the vicinity of New York*; arrived in Liverpool about March 27; went up to London, and made his first appearance, at Henry Irving's Lyceum Theatre, on April 12, 1884.

The record speaks for itself. At the very time when, according to Mr. Goodale, Henry Irving should have been "going out to sea," to welcome his friend Lawrence Barrett to England, he was acting in Brooklyn; his farewell engagement in New York City, as already intimated, began on March 31, 1884, and extended to April 26.

"Meanwhile," says Mr. Goodale, "Barrett had fretted, mourned, and chafed, and *many times*

wondered aloud what could have occurred to keep him and his friend apart."

That was indeed amazing, since Barrett perfectly well knew that his friend was, at that moment, in America, and not in London.

But an occurrence still more amazing is recorded by Mr. Goodale, an occurrence not noticed at the time, but one that, even now, should engage the serious attention of the London Society for Psychical Research.

"Ten days passed," says Mr. Goodale, "and at the close of the tenth day Irving paid the American a perfunctory visit, in his (Irving's) own theatre. . . . When he had come and gone, Barrett resumed his wonted buoyancy. 'Henry has been to see me,' he exclaimed. . . ."

That apparition, according to Mr. Goodale's touching narrative, must have presented itself to the enraptured gaze of "the American" about April 6,—or say between April 6 and April 14,—at which time the Atlantic Ocean, said to be about three thousand miles wide, was rolling between Henry Irving and Lawrence Barrett, and at which time the material body of Henry Irving

was visible at the Star Theatre, in New York, and was distinctly seen of many persons, including the writer of these words,—who was seldom absent from any one of his New York performances. The late hierophant of Brahma, Dr. Olcott, however, was kind enough to explain that there is “an astral body,” which is capable of making long journeys, very rapidly, and at short notice, and which is much addicted to fugacious excursions. No doubt it was Henry’s astral body that “paid the perfunctory visit” to Lawrence. Irving was always a restless person.

The charge that Mr. Goodale makes is that while Lawrence Barrett courteously befriended Henry Irving on his first arrival in America, Henry Irving, subsequently, in London, treated Lawrence Barrett with neglect, unkindness, and injurious duplicity. That charge is false, and it is also foolish.

The statement, furthermore, is made that Irving *advised* Barrett to begin his London engagement with a performance of *Richelieu*, and the insinuation is made that this was bad advice, given with a sinister motive. That also is calumny.

Lawrence Barrett did not begin his London Lyceum engagement with *Richelieu*. He began it with *Yorick*, in the play called "Yorick's Love," adapted for him, by W. D. Howells, from a Spanish original, and he did not produce "Richelieu" until "Yorick's Love" had ceased to attract. Both plays had been produced by him before Irving landed in England. Henry Irving gave no advice in the matter, and had nothing to do with it. He esteemed and loved Lawrence Barrett, and wished him to succeed; and when finally he came home to London and found that Barrett's season had not been prosperous, he placed his bank account at Barrett's disposal and offered all the support that might happen to be needed. Lawrence Barrett himself told that fact to me, and, presumably, he knew something about his own business.

It was not till some time later, when Irving put up the play of "Richelieu," in the course of his return season at the Lyceum Theatre, that Barrett began to feel hurt and annoyed. That proceeding on the part of Irving, and that only, was the cause of the coolness (it never took any

other form), that slowly grew up between them. That was the reason of their estrangement. Lawrence Barrett so declared to me,—not once only, but many times, and in positive, unmistakable language.

The calumny is that Henry Irving was maliciously hopeful that Lawrence Barrett, by making his advent at the London Lyceum Theatre in a part that he had himself played, would suffer by comparison, would be condemned, and would fail; and that, therefore, he named *Richelieu*. That sort of disparagement of Henry Irving has been profusely promulgated by various sore-headed persons on the stage and by their advocates, and it has become as monotonous as it is offensive. It does grievous injustice to the memory of a great and good man, who never in all his life injured anybody, and whose whole desire, with regard to the stage and to the men and women engaged in its service, was that the institution should be made noble and that its votaries should be respected and happy. The injustice of snarling at the heels of Henry Irving, for no other reason than because he achieved

a prodigious success and exerted a world-wide influence, is detestable.

As to *Richelieu*: Henry Irving acted that part for the first time at the London Lyceum Theatre, on September 27, 1873. The play ran for 120 performances. Irving did not again act the *Cardinal* till some time after the close of Lawrence Barrett's engagement at the Lyceum, in the summer of 1884,—at which time he revived it for repetitions which were scarcely more than rehearsals, with a view to its presentment in America. At the time of Barrett's appearance in the part, accordingly, the London public had not seen Irving as *Richelieu* for nearly ten years. Comparison between those two actors, therefore, was, practically, impossible. The London public, however, had seen Edwin Booth's impersonation of *Richelieu*, which was the best ever given; superior to that of Barrett, and superior to that of Irving—as I told the latter actor, after seeing him act the part, in London, in 1884; and it was in consequence of my advice, which he considered good, that he never played it in New York. He once played it in Chicago.



*Für die Werke von Hector
Berlioz 9.12.1900*

John Ryder testified, with tears, that Edwin Booth's *Richelieu* surpassed that of Macready, who was the original; and Ryder had acted in the play with both of them, and he idolized Macready's memory. Lawrence Barrett's reason for acting *Richelieu* in that London engagement simply was that *Yorick* had not pleased the mill-ion; that he knew he could give a fine performance of *Richelieu* (which he did), and that he wanted to be seen in a great character. He was right, and he had his reward—for he was greatly admired by many persons, including some of the best judges of acting in England, and including Henry Irving.

As to the comparative misfortune that attended Lawrence Barrett's London Lyceum Theatre season: The original design was that the whole of his time there should be filled with "Yorick's Love." The "Richelieu" card was played because it had to be. The reception accorded to Barrett by the London public on his opening night was wildly enthusiastic,—so that he was nearly overcome by emotion. He was recalled to the stage after his first exit; he had

three calls after the first curtain, and six after the second; and at the end of the performance he had to address the audience; and a voice, interrupting him as he tried to express his thanks, exclaimed, with true British fervor: "You deserve it all, and more." He did, for he was one of the best actors and one of the noblest gentlemen that ever lived.

The death of the Duke of Albany, putting the Court into mourning and disturbing the usual course of social affairs in London, was partly, perhaps largely, the cause of the comparative failure of Barrett's season. Before it began, as he was about to sail for America, Henry Irving, speaking from the Lyceum stage, said to his public: "You will, of course, extend welcome to my dear friend Lawrence Barrett, the famous American actor, who will appear here in the early part of next year." When Barrett's season ended, May 30, Henry Irving presented to him the Order of the Garter which had once been the property of Edmund Kean and worn by that great actor in "Richard III."

Lawrence Barrett, writing (July 15, 1884),

said: "On the night (June 1) of the memorable re-entry of Mr. Irving at the Lyceum, when I entered the box which Mr. Irving had placed at my disposal, the audience rose and cheered me. You can imagine my gratification at that spontaneous outburst from, perhaps, the most notable audience that ever assembled at a London theatre."

Both those great actors are dead. There should be no bickering over the grave. They dearly loved each other, at one time. The cloud that rose between them was but the vapor of a moment. It is all gone and ended now. The mention of it was meant only to explain it,—for even the foibles of great characters possess a certain interest for the student of human nature, "Time is like the peacefulness of grass." Let us be glad, as Goethe said that the German people ought to be, with reference to himself and Schiller, that we have two such men to remember.

DUNLAP AND OTHER HISTORIANS.

Students of theatrical history are, of course, indebted to William Dunlap for his careful, minute, conscientious chronicle of the early years of the American theatre. His record covers a period of sixty years, from about 1750 to about 1810, and that is supplemented with his life of George Frederick Cooke—surely the most alcoholic of memoirs. Of the latter book the poet Byron, in a letter to Moore, 1813, made the following mention:

“There is an American life of G. F. Cooke, *Scurra* deceased, lately published. Such a book! I believe, since *Drunken Barnaby’s Journal*, nothing like it has reached the press. All green-room and tap-room—drams and drama—brandy, whiskey-punch, and, *latterly*, toddy, overflow every page. Two things are rather marvellous—first that a man should live so long drunk, and, next, that he should have found a sober biographer. There are some very laughable things in it nevertheless:—but the pints he swallowed and the parts he performed are too regularly registered.”

Reference is made, page 19, to Dunlap’s vigilant and offensive virtue, but no detraction of him as a theatrical historian is intended. He

served the stage conscientiously and well, and his stage narratives are valuable, notwithstanding their platitude of preachment.

The narrative of the American theatre is carried onward, from Dunlap's cessation to nearly 1850, by William B. Wood's "Personal Recollections of the Stage," and Francis Courtney Wemyss's "Theatrical Biography," while Joseph N. Ireland's invaluable Records, beginning with 1750 and traversing a period of one hundred and ten years, carries the story forward to 1860. To supplement those annals is one part of the purpose of the present volume.

Dunlap's comments on Cooke elicited a defence of that tragedian from Fennell, which can be found in his "Apology," coupled with the remark,—not irrelevant as applied to Dunlap's subsequent almost equally obnoxious comments on Fennell: "It seems curious that persons connected with the drama, and with the history of dramatic performers, should indulge themselves in the exposition of the errors of actors so profusely." Fennell's autobiography is especially notable for its glimpses of famous persons. He

knew Voltaire, in Paris, and he describes him in quite the spirit of an aggrieved Christian. He knew Washington, and he records that his infant son was once taken into the arms of that illustrious man. Washington's partiality for "the Play" and his relations, such as they were, with the Theatre, have been made the subject of an ample, minute, interesting monograph, by the late Paul Leicester Ford,—being Number 8, of the New Series of the Publications of the Dunlap Society, 1899.

In dismissing this book to the dubious chances of publicity I am conscious of a sense of mingled relief and solicitude: relief, because a delicate and difficult work has been done, and solicitude because of its imperfection. Biography, when it treats of men and women of genius, is the most interesting of all themes, but, of all themes, it is then the most elusive and perplexing,—for such persons are never fully and exactly comprehended. It is the nature of genius to be alone and lonely. Observation, intuition, and sympathy, while perhaps discerning much, cannot

discern all, and therefore the testimony of the biographer remains imperfect. These portraits of exceptional actors whom I have known have been drawn with conscientious care, with scrupulous fidelity, and in strict accordance with the noble Shakespearean precept, "Nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice." The gallery is incomplete, but Time would enable me to extend it; and, if this book should prove fortunate in the acquirement of public approbation, I shall be encouraged to attempt the commemoration of other old companions of the Stage, and thus to augment these recollections of Other Days.

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